

THE
STRAND MAGAZINE

An Illustrated Monthly

EDITED BY
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Vol. II.
JULY TO DECEMBER



London:
BURLEIGH STREET, STRAND

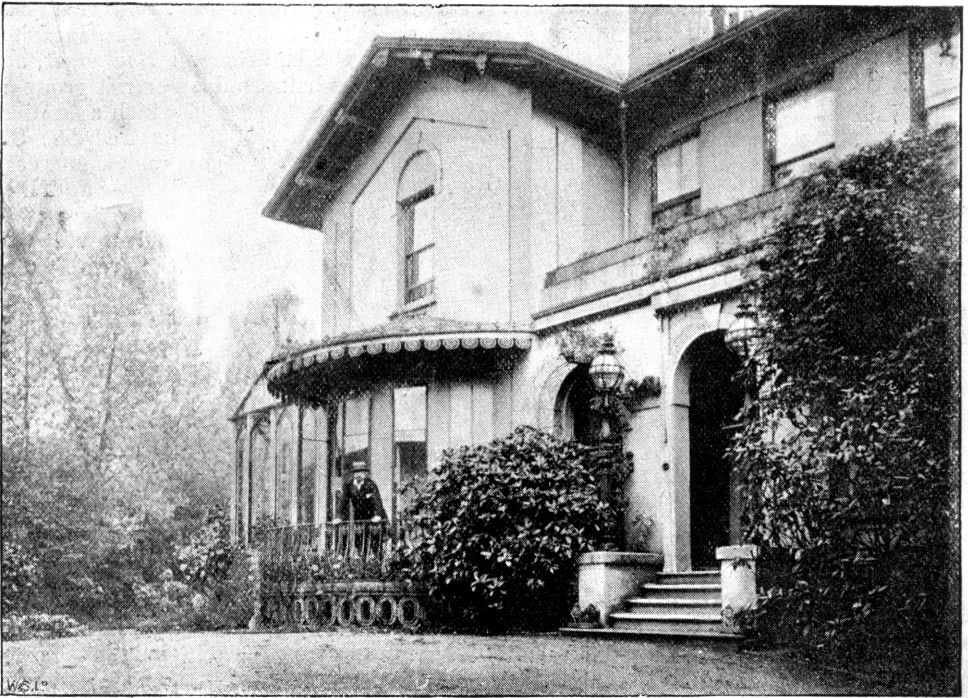
1891



PREPARING FOR THE PANTOMIME.

Illustrated Interviews.

No. VI.—SIR AUGUSTUS HARRIS.



From a Photo. by]

THE ELMS.

[Elliott & Fry.



MERRY Christmas ! A merry, merry Christmas ! Sir Augustus Harris enters at the happiest period of the year. His name is positively seasonable ; at Christmas he is as inseparable from pantomime as the pudding is from the table on the five-and-twentieth day of this month. After spending a considerable time with this veritable Crichton amongst theatrical managers, wandering about Covent Garden and Old Drury, and watching the elaborate preparations for pantomime, one's pen seems to run away on the heartiest of best wishes ever expressed in a trio of words—A Merry Christmas !

I had much trouble in catching Sir Augustus. He is one of the six busiest men in London. Our long interview together was held in all sorts and conditions of places ; over the breakfast table at his delightful

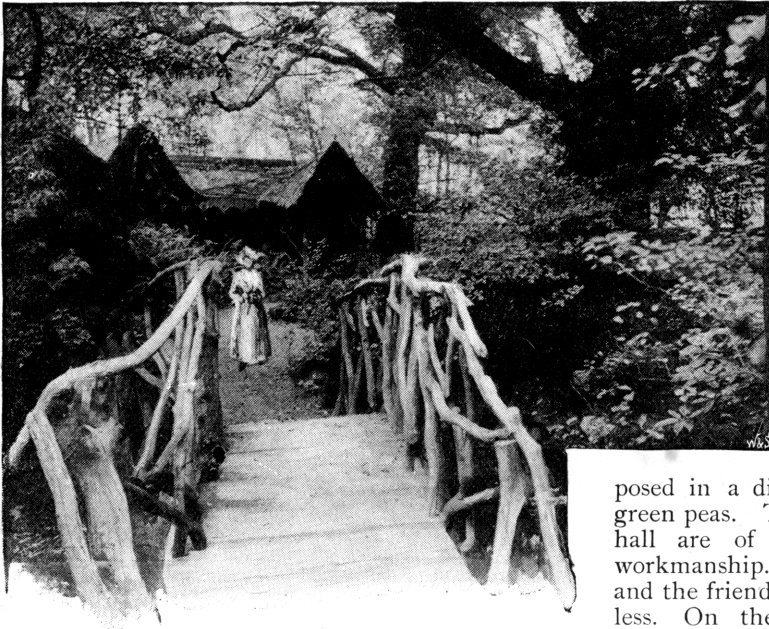
home at "The Elms," Regent's Park, on the slopes of Primrose Hill ; at the theatre, whilst he was buying rich and rare brocades, testing somebody's voice at Covent Garden, or sampling another's terpsichorean capabilities in the *foyer* of Drury Lane. And in all this the ex-Sheriff of London has a wonderful faculty. He can watch a couple of youngsters merrily trip a minuet, and give you at the same time unquestionable facts and figures. He seems to revel in transacting a dozen things at one and the same time, and comes through all successfully.

In appearance Sir Augustus is of medium height, stoutly built, and never at a loss for a smile. He is partially bald, but, as he declares, the hard work associated with management is sufficient to make any man lose his hair. No man has a keener eye than he ; no man can scent a bargain quicker. He will bid for a voice one moment, and a

hundred guineas for some exquisite lace to put on a chorus singer's costume the next. At Regent's Park, where he lives with his wife and only child—Florence Nellie—a pretty little lady of eight summers, and the proud possessor of every animal pet imaginable, with a couple of tiny rabbits as particular favourites—he has a charming home. It seems to be right away from the world. To reach the house one passes up a long and leafy avenue, a glorious stretch of elms, about half way up which is St. Stephen's Church. The gates

thatched out-buildings—years ago a farm stood here, and the dairy and bake-house still remain as mementoes; indeed, this very spot was once known as Primrose Farm.

The entrance hall is crowded with pictures of operatic stars and theatrical celebrities, City magnates, men eminent in the world of art and letters, and many portraits of the master of the house in the various characters in which he has appeared, an autographed picture of the late General Boulanger, and close by the hall-stand a portrait group in which a fine duck has a corner. She was a pretty creature—one of little Florrie's pets—and would with the greatest alacrity sit on a chair to table. She would even accompany the cat for a stroll up the Avenue-road. This led to her loss. One day she disappeared, and has not been seen since—probably, long ere this, she has



From a Photo. by]

IN THE GROUNDS.

[Elliott & Fry.

of "The Elms" are immediately in front. A few more steps and you are on the grand lawn in front of the house where Mario and Grisi once lived. Before entering the porch, over which the Virginia creeper is hanging, just stay to admire the pretty nooks about the grounds, with its delightful rustic summer-houses and quaint bridges, under which the ducks are swimming. The goat, Nan—the tiny chaise is near at hand—is making friends with Nelly, a St. Bernard with a coat to be envied, in a corner of the stable; and here, running along one side of the church, is the kitchen garden: in the midst of the rows of scarlet-runners and beds of potatoes stands a huge bust of Victor Hugo, which was brought from the National Theatre. There are numbers of old-fashioned

posed in a dish surrounded with green peas. The hangings in the hall are of exquisite Japanese workmanship. Walk up the stairs and the friendly photos are countless. On the landing is a fine ebony cabinet with numerous nicknacks, amongst which is a great silver-plated stick, engraved with signs fearful and wonderful—the magic wand of Professor Anderson, rescued from amongst the *débris* after the great fire at Covent Garden.

Just at hand is a photograph of a group of the members of the Drury Lane Fund at their annual friendly gathering at Burnham Beeches, with a few of their friends, amongst whom were Mr. Willard, Mr. Fernandez, Mr. Harry Nichols, and Mr. Fred Latham. Another position was suggested. "Very well," said Augustus Harris; "Right about face!"—and everyone turned his back on the camera and was so taken.

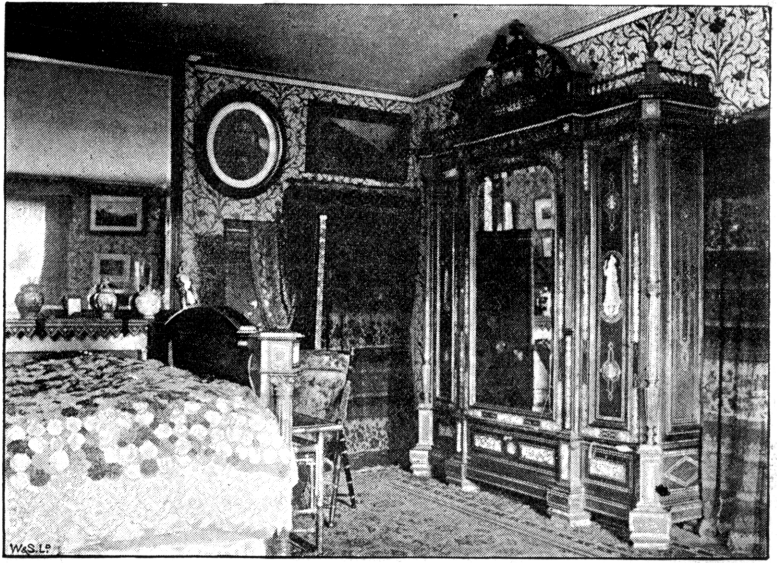
Leading off from this landing is the bedroom. It is practically a workroom. In the bookcases are every conceivable work

on costumes of every period and country. Whilst running through a volume, a pretty combination in colours strikes Sir Augustus, and he jots it down for the coming pantomime. A hundred reference books are glanced through. I run over the pages containing the original score of Wagner's "Tannhäuser," which cost £200; and then, over an early cup of coffee, we turn over leaf after leaf

of one of many volumes of odd cuttings of intense interest. Here is a letter from Lefroy, confessing his guilt. Lefroy, it seems, used to occupy his time in prison by writing such letters to prominent individuals. Then we come to many interesting pages in the family history. Sir Augustus's grandmother was Madam Elizabeth Ferron, the famous opera singer, who popularised the opera, "No song—no supper." We read through her engagement agreement—she was getting £30 a week in 1828 at the Royal English Opera House, now the Lyceum Theatre, and soon afterwards £40 a night at Drury Lane—at that time considered a big salary. On the next page is the engagement of Donata, the famous one-legged dancer, who danced himself to death; and the telegram announcing the burning of Covent Garden Theatre on March 5, 1856.

The bedroom suite—a work of art—is of walnut, inlaid with red tortoiseshell and ivory, and exquisitely engraved. Hanging to a convenient post at the head are telegram forms, slips of paper, and pencil. If the master of the house has an idea in the middle of the night, paper and pencil are handy. On a small table is a huge cut-glass bottle of what looks like smelling-salts.

"The finest remedy for headache in the world," says Sir Augustus. "It is Dr. Lennox Browne's recipe, and is simply lumps of carbonate of ammonia steeped in eau-de-Cologne."



From a Photo. by]

THE BEDROOM AND LIBRARY.

[Elliott & Fry.

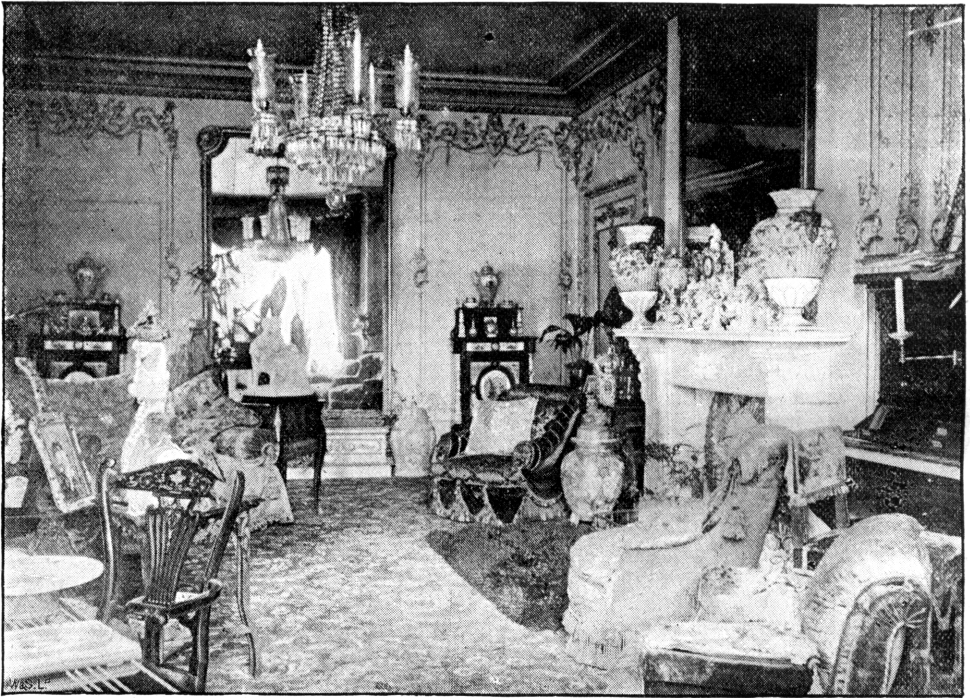
In a corner is the safe. Hey, presto! and I have in my hand the gold snuff-box studded with diamonds which he received on the occasion of the German Emperor's visit.

The two rooms next to the bedroom are not without interest. The first apartment is devoted to a score of testimonials, framed, and the various patents granted to him—among others, the approval of Her Majesty to his election as Sheriff, and the patent of a fact which will be new to many, namely, that of the knighthood conferred on him by the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, ten years ago. The room adjoining this has a great cabinet containing all the sketches of past Drury Lane pantomimes, from the earliest time of the Dykwynkyn *régime*, and on a table near the window numbers of silver mementoes, one of which is a substantial silver snuff-box, presented by the renowned E. T. Smith to E. L. Blanchard, and afterwards passed on by his widow to Augustus Harris.

Downstairs a room is devoted to the storage of nearly every opera produced for the last eighty years, including the collection of his grandmother and father. On the wall hangs "The Glossop" pedigree, for Sir Augustus Harris's real name is Glossop, and Harris a *nom de théâtre*, originally assumed by his father. The pedigree starts from 1624, and it shows that nearly all the male members of the Glossop family for two centuries have been clergymen.

The drawing-room is a delightful apartment, and opens out into a conservatory, where is a wealth of fuchsias, lilies, azaleas, palms, and ferns. The walls are of cream delicately picked out in gold. Dresden china crowds the marble mantelboard and every nook, save for an occasional rarity in Japanese ware. Many portraits are here, and the little daughter is to be seen in no end of positions as chronicled by the camera—here with one of her pets, and in another in the costume of the "Queen of Hearts," as she

Lady Harris—a most charming woman—joins us, and we enter the dining-room, with its fine bronzes, and sideboard overweighted with silver flagons and tankards, salvers, and other choice examples of the silversmith's art presented to Sir Augustus by the members of his various companies. Many interesting oil paintings adorn the walls, including one, by Cecil M. Round, of Lady Harris, with her little girl in a blue frock and white hood rushing to her side. Another is an exceptionally clever work by W. L. Wyllie, painted in 1882. Two fine busts of



From a Photo. by]

THE DRAWING-ROOM.

[Elliott & Fry.

appeared at a recent Mansion House ball. Just then she bounds into the room and plays a small operatic air for our enjoyment. She is caught up by her father.

"This child has so many pets," he says, "that I am thinking of charging 6d. to anybody who wants to come and see them. Do you know, this place is often taken for the Zoo by strangers on their way to that popular resort? Only the other day a couple of boys walked up the path. 'We've got 'em, sir,' one said. 'What?' I asked. 'The tickets to admit us.' 'Where to—"The Elms?'" 'No, sir; the Zoo!' 'Bottom of the road and the first gate you come to!' I directed them."

Aunt Chloe and Uncle Tom occupy a position near the window, and everybody wants to know why Lady Harris puts an old straw hat on Uncle Tom. It is part of the modelling, but is so realistic as to cheat the eye. Then, all in a happy mood, we breakfast together, and a few minutes later I am seated by Sir Augustus Harris's side driving down to the theatre.

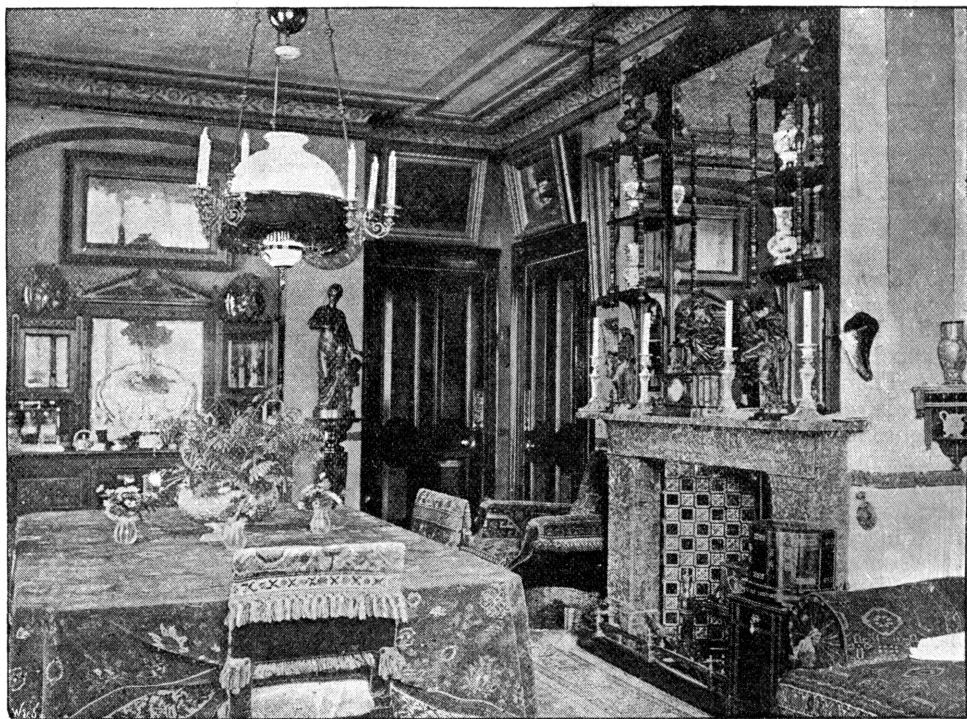
That drive—round Regent's Park, down Portland-place, and through the busy traffic of Regent-street—resulted in the story of many interesting incidents in his remarkable career. No man has worked harder than he, and he frankly admits that he has made his greatest successes out of the

very efforts of his enemies. He was manager of the National Theatre at twenty-seven, and ten years later had the two great patent theatres under his sole control.

"I was born in Paris, March 18, 1852—to-day I go to Paris as often as I go over Waterloo-bridge. I was brought to England shortly after. At the age of ten, I started as stage manager, author, and my own scenic artist—as *impresario* of a large model stage. I worried my father into giving it to me. It was some seven feet high, fitted up for me in a large room used as a laundry, at the back of the stables, and here I would perform 'The Miller and his Men,' and similar sensational plays to a very select audience. My efforts, however, soon led me into an original groove, and I really believe this early practice was of great service to me in after life. There was a big fire scene in 'The Miller,' and my anxiety to get realism even at that early age resulted in my having an explosion. I nearly blew the

took place at school at Turnham Green. The boys were getting up a charade, just before the Christmas holidays. Some dresses were required, amongst others a clown's costume. My father had this made for me. The charade was a success, and the dress was put away in my play-box to take home. Now I fear I must tell you that as a youth I made up my mind never to be unjustly sat upon. Shortly after the charade, my master punished me for an offence of which I was not guilty, and sent me out of the room. I smarted under this very considerably, and determined to be even with him, and at the same time give my schoolfellows a bit of good fun. All was still, when suddenly the door opened, and I bounded into the room in the clowns' costume with a shout of 'Here we are again!' You can imagine what the result was, and no doubt I deserved it.

"At the age of thirteen I went to a college in Paris, where I remained some



From a Photo. by]

THE DINING-ROOM.

[Elliott & Fry.

laundry roof off one day, and shattered the nerves of my audience for a considerable period.

"Another incident in my early life which I always look back upon with astonishment,

four or five years. From there I went to Hanover to learn German, and finally came to London, where I became treasurer to my father at Covent Garden theatre. Still I wanted to go into a commercial life, and,

through the influence of a great silk merchant, was allowed to study raw silk at the St. Katherine Docks, with the intention of going out to Japan. Day by day I went to learn the Chinese "chops," and to see every sample of silk that came into the London market. I was, however, offered the post of foreign correspondent at Messrs. Emile Erlanger & Co., the financiers of Lothbury—a firm with branches in every great financial centre. I cast off the silk, and went in for finance. I remained there three years, and then accepted a much better position in Paris. I had only been in Paris about a month when my father died. Old John Ryder was in Paris. I consulted him, and he, after trying my histrionic capabilities, advised me to take to the stage. I went to Manchester to play *Malcolm* in 'Macbeth,' at the Royal. Then to Liverpool. There I had the hardest fortnight I have ever had in my life. I got the large sum of £2 a week to study twelve parts in a fortnight—which I had to do with the aid of strong tea to drink, and wet towels round my head to keep me awake.

"Then I came across Mapleson, who appointed me stage manager for his Italian Opera Company. I was with him until he went to America.

"It was whilst with Mapleson that I met that grand artiste, Titiens. Poor Titiens! She might almost be said to have died in harness. Her first serious attack was at Portsmouth. She was playing *Leonora* in 'Il Trovatore,' and at the end of the opera she is supposed to fall dead. The

curtain was rung down. She was found to be suffering terribly. She was a slave to her duty, and that night had performed every note before giving way. She underwent a series of operations, but all of no avail. She only played one night more, and then died. She was a brilliant artist, but she was never thoroughly appreciated to the full extent of her genius.

"Then I played in 'Pink Dominoes' for 500 nights. I produced pantomimes at the Crystal Palace in partnership with Charles Wyndham; and, being out of an engagement, went to see my friend Edgar Bruce, who was going to open the Royalty.

"Do you want a treasurer?" I asked.

"No," came the answer.

"A manager?"

"No."

"A stage manager?"

"No."

"An acting manager?"

"No."

"The 'Noes' had it, and I retired. However, I returned

to the charge, and he engaged me as acting manager. I soon found myself also performing the duties of stage manager, treasurer, author, actor, all rolled into one. Bruce went to Egypt, leaving me in absolute charge of the theatre.

"About this time Drury Lane was advertised 'To let.' There was 'Drury Lane to Let' right in front of me. Why shouldn't I take it? Fortune seemed to favour me, and a gentleman of position and fortune said he would find the money. I applied for the theatre, and, though my youthful appearance stood terribly in the way, still, after weeks of anxious negotiations, I was accepted as tenant, and was asked for a deposit



From a Photo. by]

SIR AUGUSTUS HARRIS.

[Elliot & Fry.

of £1,000. I went to my friend, and he was *non est*. What was to be done? The money had to be found! I made up my mind not to be beaten, and I wasn't, for on the appointed day I paid the deposit, much to the satisfaction of the lawyers of my landlord, and to the surprise of my own. 'The World' was really my first great success, and from that day I have never looked back.

"There is a romantic side to the story. Soon after the death of Mr. Rendle, who helped me to open the old theatre, I married his daughter. We were married at 8 o'clock in the morning at St. Luke's, and I shall never forget poor Harry Jackson spreading the report that I was to be married at such and such a church at 11 o'clock, a joke he practised day by day on a number of people for over a fortnight, and in one instance hundreds of people assembled at Hanover-square to witness the ceremony, and in another quite a select party of well-known actors specially went to a quiet little church in the North of London on a similar fruitless errand."

As Sir Augustus laughed heartily at this little incident, we had reached Covent Garden Theatre. We stayed there for a moment to see the wardrobe, unrivalled for its beauty by any opera-house in the world. There are rooms filled with costumes—they hang up in the great cupboards wrapped in tissue paper, for all the world like so many hams. They are numbered up in hundreds

—shoes, stockings, dress, belt, hat, gloves, all corresponding, a large proportion of the handsomest dresses being the personal property of Sir Augustus; the remaining part has been accumulating here for over forty years, and one comes across dresses once worn by the great Mario, and now allotted

to a member of the chorus. The dresses cost from a few pounds to a hundred guineas apiece. In some instances two hundred has been paid.

"I have spent £15,000 on dresses this year for the opera alone," said Sir Augustus, taking up the delicate dress worn by Miss Eames as *Desdemona*, and pointing out its marvellous workmanship. "*Romeo* is the most expensive opera I have ever dressed; but as it always draws such enormous houses, and as I have purchased all rights in it for the British Empire, I could afford to be extravagant, and I have been."

"Gounod, when asked which opera he liked best, 'Faust' or 'Romeo,' replied: 'When I wrote "Faust" I was younger, when I wrote "Romeo" I was older.' Last opera season about balanced itself. The accountant's books show a return of £80,819. But the expenses of the artists were so great that little or nothing was left, but I wished the season should be a memorable one, and live in the recollection of those who appreciate true art, and I am perfectly content. There would have been a large profit had it not been for the influenza and the financial



From a Photo. by]

LADY HARRIS.

[Elliott & Fry.



HUMPTY-DUMPTY'S EGG.

crisis, which took away all the Stock Exchange men. When a man comes to the opera, you know that he is doing good business. As Rothschild said, 'Good business in the City means a good opera season.'

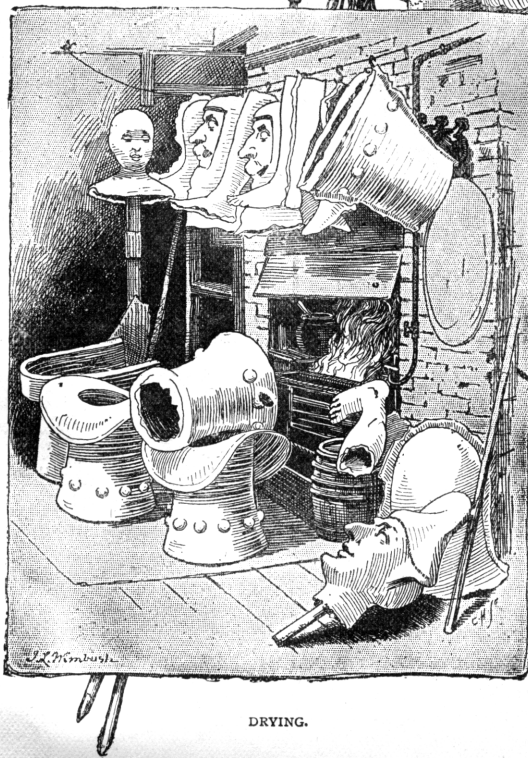
"It might interest you to know that the night the German Emperor visited Covent Garden Theatre the house was worth £5,658. His box alone cost £1,000 to decorate. When, in the Jubilee year, I determined to try Italian Opera somebody remarked to me 'It's dead.' 'Very well,' I replied, 'I'll either revive it or give it a

decent burial.' I did revive it, but it cost me £16,000 in six weeks. However, the next year opera was living and in a healthier state than ever, and I got my money back and had done something in the cause of art.

And now for the home of pantomime—for old Drury Lane. We crossed Bow-street together, and entered through the great portals which lead into the theatre. It is a marvellous place; you can pass through fifty rooms and find another score awaiting your in-



MOULDING MASKS.



DRYING.

spection. As for the staircases, they are positively a Chinese puzzle to the uninitiated. These are times of merriment, days when the happy laughter of the little ones ring to the roof of the theatre at the fun and frolic of the pantomime. We

want to know all about it—what it costs, how it is produced—and Sir Augustus Harris is in possession of the key of knowledge.

"What does it cost?" he cries. "There



WIRING MASKS.



TOUCHING UP THE GROG BLOSSOM.

are my books." He turns over page after page in a great book. "A pantomime costs from £16,000 to £20,000 for dresses, scenery, &c. A big procession costs from £5,000 to £6,000. A good principal boy means £60 to £100 a week, a troupe of acrobats £70 or more, a first-class clown £30 or £40, and a sprightly dancer £30 to £50. Then there are many other salaries of £45, £30, £25, £10 a week each, whilst the ballet averages out at 30s. a week, with extra for mornings. More salaries, for the

week: Carpenters, £191 3s. 3d.; property men, £129 12s. 6d.; gas and electric light men, £26 3s. 8d.; limelight men, £26 9s. 6d.; wardrobe, dressers, and others, £111 4s. 10d.; paint-room artist, £334 10s. 11d.; orchestra, £160 a week."

Then we go on to the stage. What a change from the brilliancy of the thousand lights at night! The auditorium is in darkness; the house clothed, as it were, in great white cloths. How different, too, the scene on the stage! The pupils of the school for dancing have been rehearsing, and there is a lull for a moment. The pianist has stopped; the young ladies arrayed in neat cotton "practice" dresses, are resting for the moment, though a quartet of the most industrious are still tripping to a one, two, three, four in a deserted corner.

They have a month's good work before them ere the curtain rises on "Humpty-Dumpty" on Boxing night, and plenty of practice in store previous to being drafted into the regular ballet. Little fellows are trying on their masks, waiting to be provided with a comfortable fit,

and the tiniest and sweetest of little fairies are lightly walking about with wands in their hands, learning how to "stir the soup," as waving the wand is familiarly designated in pantomime circles. A pretty little mite is just passing before Sir Augustus. She must try and use that magic wand more gracefully, and he shows her how. Away she goes to practise in a corner. She will soon learn—earnestness is written on her little face; she wants to be noticed in the



"HOW'S THIS?"

great stage picture on Boxing night.

Leaving this busy scene, I visit the modelling or property-room. The men are handling heads and creating countenances upon them calculated to give rise to a smile on the most serious face. Here is the first stage of the immense egg out of which

Humpty-Dumpty will jump. It has just been moulded, and will go through a score of other stages until completed. Take this big giant's head for instance. It is just being modelled at the far end of the room.

The interior of the gigantic cranium is filled with pots, pails, and odd things to hold the clay together; then a cast will be taken of it in plaster-of-Paris. When it is thoroughly set it will be cleaned and oiled, and then layers of paper will be placed in it, on which the features are to be painted. A wonderful array of models are being dried in front of the great fires—immense kitchen grates—huge Cavaliers' hats, Crusaders' heads, interspersed with legs, while a fine punchinello is quietly resting on the ground. A woman is wiring the edges of a mask to keep it firm, whilst on a wooden support is the wonderful cranium of a Crusader, with a sensational moustache, and a worker is giving the gallant knight's nose a finishing touch. Others are "trying on" to see the effect. Pussy's head looks capital on a white-aproned worker.

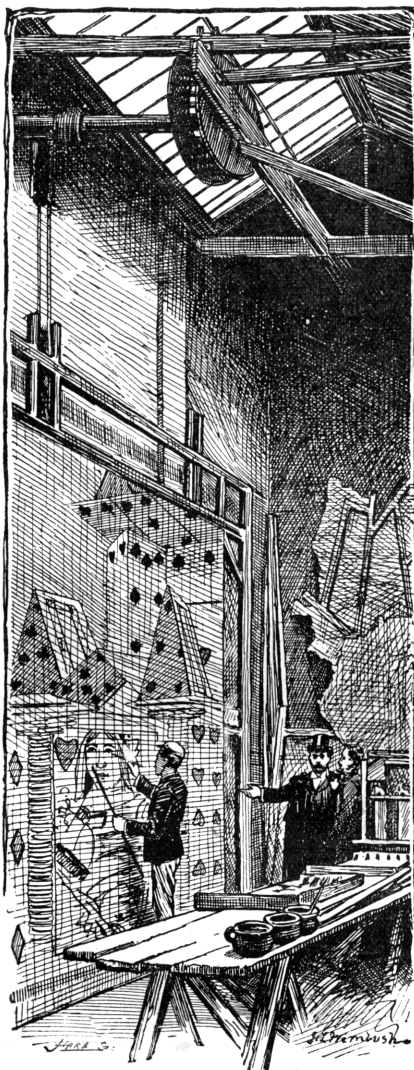
"Twelve months will be occupied in making all we need for a pantomime," Sir Augustus said, handling a little toy nigger. "We have made in this room a giant's head six feet high; it needed the services of six men to creep inside and work all the machinery. It took three months to make. We use for a single pantomime five hundredweight of paper, three tons of clay, and over ten tons of plaster-of-Paris. Of course, the clay is used again and again—it may be a giant's head one week and the body of a little

cupid the next." We hurry through the great store-rooms, where are silent mementoes of many a past Christmas production. Soldiers and sailors are no bigger than the six-foot human knives and forks

which tripped along so merrily last year. Here are huge plaster bouquets and dishes of fruits, cherries, strawberries, luscious pears, and bunches of grapes, gilded columns and angels, imps of mischief—in short, a wonderful *olla podrida* of properties. Then to the work-rooms—the dress-making departments, where altogether a hundred women are busy with the needle. The treadles of the machines are being industriously worked, thousands of spangles, heaps of glittering jewels, are being sewn on to the richest of brocades, some of which material costs as much as fifteen guineas a yard. A *costumière* is cutting out the patterns. She has the design of the dress painted on a small card some nine inches long by five inches wide, and her experienced eye knows exactly what to cut, to half an inch.

Then to one of the paint-rooms. The famous manager sits down in front of a little model stage—the trees, bridges, and paths are in cardboard, the very clouds of the same

material. He looks at the scene. Down comes a bridge, a tree is uprooted to another position, and a cloud is moved away. From this model the artist will paint the great canvas. The palettes—set out on the bench which stretches through the centre of the room—have twenty-five or thirty different divisions filled with all the colours of the rainbow. Paint pots are



THE PAINTING-ROOM.

dotted about, the huge canvas sheets hang suspended from the roof, and already fairy-land is beginning to appear on some of them in response, to the magic touch of the artist's brush. A second canvas reveals a huge comic kitchen—it will take a fortnight to paint. A single joint here would fill the window of an average butcher's shop. Every cut is prize meat, indeed; the very penny bottles of ginger-beer are three feet high. Old Drury will ring with laughter on Boxing-night.

I asked Sir Augustus what class of entertainment he best preferred, pantomime, melodrama, spectacular, or opera?

His reply was, "My acts speak for themselves. Do you suppose I should take all this trouble, subject myself to the fads and fancies of singers, if it was not that I delight in all that is most refined and most artistic? I love good music, good flowers, good painting, good everything. In fact, only the best of everything is good enough

for me, and my public. My friends say I am too lavish in my expenditure, but I am convinced that there is a large section of the public who fully appreciate a good thing when it is placed before them. Where is the proof? Look at Covent Garden. I have applications for next grand opera season that would more than twice fill the boxes. If you want a good thing you must be prepared to pay for it, and I consider my great success in pantomime has been through trying to elevate the tastes of the public, for I cannot see why an endeavour should not be made to make pantomime a work of art, such as I have always tried to make it. But whatever the performance, whether it be Wagner's masterpieces, a child's Christmas entertainment, a popular melodrama, or an exquisite idyl like Gounod's 'Philémon et Baucis,' everything is worthy of the greatest care. In short, to

quote an old maxim, 'If a thing is worth doing at all it is worth doing well.'"

HARRY HOW.



TWO KISSES.



HAT Christmas Eve we were all seated cosily around the cheerful drawing-room fire; and, as my eldest brother was then on his way from Liverpool, where he was engaged in business, expressly to spend Christmas Day at home, we children had been graciously accorded permission to remain up and await his arrival. In the corner of the broad fireplace, reclining in her easy-chair, grandma looked smilingly from one young face to the other, evidently quite prepared for the demand made upon her on all such special occasions. Nor had she to wait very long; for scarcely had mamma looked at her watch and announced that Richard might be expected to knock his usual loud "rat-a-tat-tat-tat" at the door in just forty-five minutes punctually from that moment, when little Nellie turned to the white-haired old lady in the arm-chair and exclaimed, clapping her tiny hands: "Oh, grandma! Tell us a nice, pretty story."

"Yes, grandma, do!" we all chimed in.

"A lovely fairy tale," said Ethel, a young lady of nine summers.

"No, no, grandma," expostulated Master

Ned, who was two years Ethel's senior; "let's have a ghost story—one that'll make our flesh creep."

"What rubbish!" said Ethel, contemptuously. "As if every sensible person doesn't know, nowadays, that there's no such thing as a ghost."

"Quite as many as there are fairies, anyhow," retorted Ned.

"Ah! but fairies are delightful," returned Ethel, determined to have the last word of the dispute, "and ghosts are always disagreeable."

"Well, well, children," said grandma, "we won't discuss the question. Fairies and ghosts both have their merits, no doubt, especially from the story-teller's point of view, and I should be sorry to say a single word against either. But, as tastes differ, I don't think it desirable to make any of you dissatisfied, so I shall avoid both goblins and fairies to-night, and tell you a story about a certain old lady of your acquaintance."

"A true, *real* old lady?" asked Edith, a quiet child of seven, who had not previously spoken.

"Yes, my love," replied grandma, smiling. "The old lady I mean is a very genuine

person—at least, I hope she is—and the story about her is perfectly true.”

“All right, grandma,” blurted out Master Ned; “if it’s not going to be creepy, I hope it’s funny, that’s all.”

“I’m afraid you will be disappointed, my dear,” continued grandma, shaking her head, “for the story is about myself, and I don’t think I ever did anything funny in my whole life.”

“About you, grandma?” we all exclaimed, joyfully. “Oh, do tell us!”

“Well, then, children,” said grandma, “when I was Gertrude’s age”—and here the good old lady glanced pleasantly at me—“I was much like what she is now; that is to say, tall for a girl of fourteen, slight of figure, with long, wavy, fair hair, blue eyes, and rosy cheeks. In fact, if I may be allowed to say so, I was pronounced by good judges to be—ahem!—rather attractive. My eyes are still blue, but the rest of my description is considerably altered, as you see. Such changes will happen, you know, in the course of fifty years, so I shall not give way to fruitless lamentations.

“At the time I mention I was no longer quite a child, but could scarcely be considered a young lady—don’t forget that I am speaking of fifty years ago, and that the girls of that period were by no means so advanced and so clever as those of the present day.” (I half suspect this was intended ironically.)

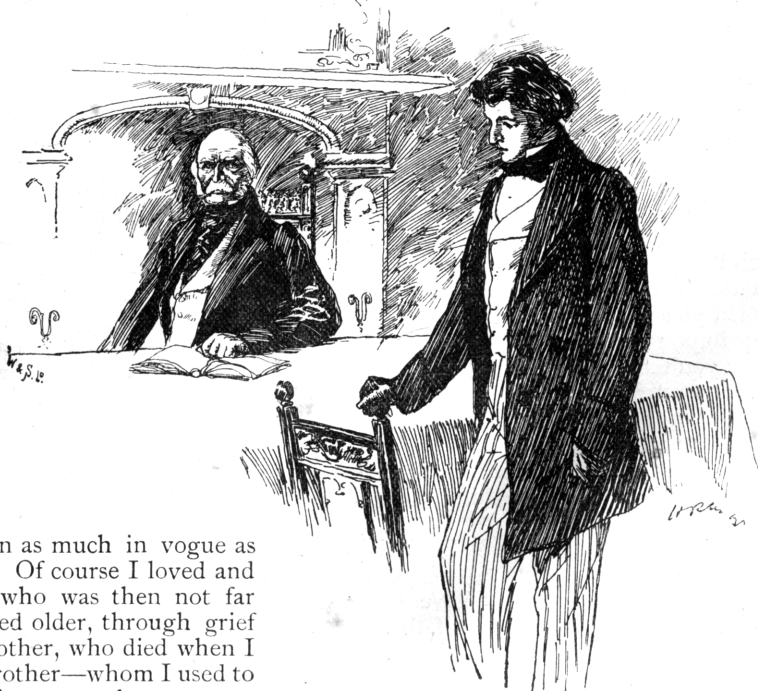
“However, when I was fourteen,” grandma continued, “I fancy I must have been still very simple-minded, for my existence, apart from my studies, was wrapped up in two passions, love for my only brother, whom I worshipped, and an inordinate fondness for the game of battledore and shuttlecock, then as much in vogue as lawn tennis is now. Of course I loved and revered my father, who was then not far from sixty, and looked older, through grief at the loss of my mother, who died when I was an infant. My brother—whom I used to call ‘my big brother’—was twelve years my

senior, and we were Colonel Norton’s only remaining children, a boy and girl having died before my birth.

“It was during the autumn holidays, one very rainy, unpleasant July day—we sometimes have such July days in London, even now!—and I was in the drawing-room, moping, instead of playing shuttlecock in the garden with my brother Frederick, who was always ready to do anything I asked, or, as he called it, commanded. I was dozing over a stupid book, when all at once I was roused by the sound of voices in the adjoining room, my father’s study. In another moment, I heard my father and brother in evident altercation, the former speaking in loud and angry tones—so loud, indeed, that I could hear distinctly every word he uttered, whilst my brother’s voice, though pitched in a lower key, was quite audible through the thin partition which separated the two disputants from me.

“‘Father,’ said Frederick, respectfully but firmly, ‘I am resolved to make Mary Cuthbert my wife, because she is in every way worthy to bear our name, and because I love her.’

“‘And I,’ replied my father, ‘am equally resolved that you shall not have my consent to marry a penniless governess. Now, if you persist in your intention,



“YOU SHALL NOT HAVE MY CONSENT”

you will know exactly the course I shall pursue.'

"I understand you, father. I am deeply grieved to offend you, but if it must be so I shall leave your house. As I have already told you, I love Mary Cuthbert, she has consented to become my wife, and my word is pledged to her. I am twenty-six years of age, and you have no legal control over my actions.'

"Very well, sir!' replied my father, after a painful pause. 'Do as you please, but bear in mind that from the hour of your marriage, you and the woman you are about to force into my family are strangers to me for ever.'

"I hope, father, that time will convince you of the harshness and injustice of such a determination—that you will forget and forgive.'

"Never, sir! Good-bye!'

"In another instant the study door opened, and my brother appeared in the room where I sat trembling and bewildered. He was quite calm, but very pale. Perceiving me, he came at once and took me in his arms.

"Good-bye, darling,' he said, sadly. 'I am going away for a long, long time, and I don't know when I shall see my little sister again.'

"No, no!' I cried. 'Don't say that, dear Frederick! You know I am not angry with you—how could I be angry with you, my dear, kind brother?'

"He looked at me inquiringly. 'Ah!' he said. 'You heard what passed just now, Maggie, did you?' Then, as if remembering the difference in our ages, he added: 'I wish I could explain all to you, dear, but I must not do that now. You are only a child, you know, little sister. These are matters which you will understand better when you are a few years older. All I can say to you at present is that I shall always love you tenderly, whether I am near you or far away.'

"And I shall always love you, too, dear brother,' I sobbed.

"He took me once more in his strong arms, kissed my quivering lips, and was gone.

"A fortnight afterwards Frederick Norton married the woman to whom he had given his heart, and now gave his name. It was a severe shock to my father, whose soldier's notions of duty and obedience were thus set at defiance by his only son. 'I will never forgive him,' he declared, 'never!'

"From that day the undivided affection of the proud, imperious, self-willed, but kind-hearted old man centred in me alone. I became his constant companion, and rather than permit me to be away from him even for a few hours each day, he took me from school, and engaged professors to continue my education under his own immediate direction, whilst he himself yielded to all my girlish whims and caprices with the most absolute docility. This commenced the hour of my brother's departure, and increased as time went on. My father appeared to divine and anticipate my smallest wishes, and often when I went out with him I was afraid to admire any trinket or knickknack I happened to notice in the shop-windows, well knowing that if I did so he would be sure to buy it for me before the day was over.

"To this paternal indulgence there was only a single exception, and on that one subject—my discarded brother—Colonel Norton remained as immovable as a rock.

"Often and often I essayed to bring about a reconciliation, and in furtherance of this much-desired end I exerted all the vast influence I knew I possessed over my father, and every feminine artifice as well, but my efforts were totally unavailing. The moment I commenced the forbidden theme, his brow darkened, and he commanded me to be silent. The tone he adopted on these occasions left me no alternative but to obey. I knew his nature too well to resist compliance with his will. I was repulsed, but not vanquished. Indeed, my hopes of ultimate victory were not in the least diminished by many successive checks which might well have disheartened a feeble girl like me, had I not been firmly resolved to triumph in the end. I was a soldier's daughter, and I had read enough of Roman history to remember that to temporise is sometimes to win."

"I know what *that* means, grandma," interrupted Master Ned, eager to display his erudition.

"What does it mean, my dear?" replied the old lady, smiling.

"Why, Fabius Cunctator, the Roman Consul, who played the waiting game against Annibal," replied Ned, proudly.

"You are perfectly right, Edward, and I adopted the Fabian policy of caution, refusing to fight in the open field, but continually harassing the enemy by counter-marches and ambuscades, like my wise Roman predecessor. Ah! what a clever

general or field-marshal I might have made, if only I had been a man !

"Well, time passed on, until between six and seven years had elapsed since my father and brother had separated in anger. A reconciliation seemed as far off as ever, and I was almost beginning to lose courage, when one day at a dinner-party given by a high functionary of that period, at which my father and I were present, an incident occurred that unexpectedly revived my drooping hopes.

"Amongst other subjects of dinner-table conversation, an allusion was made to a recent railway accident in which, it was stated, a young civil engineer who chanced to be a passenger in the train, had saved many lives by his coolness and intrepidity. The gentleman who described the event was a stranger, seated just opposite to my father. He related how the engine-driver had been suddenly seized with illness, and the locomotive left ungoverned to rush on at full speed, when the young man spoken of had crawled along the footboards of the carriages, and, at the risk of his life, succeeded in stopping the train just in time to prevent a terrible catastrophe.

"And who was the brave young fellow?" inquired my father.

"For a moment there was an embarrassed silence; then our host said quietly:—

"Well, Colonel Norton, I am pleased to tell you it was your own son !"

"I am not surprised," said my father, simply. "My son only did his duty."

"But at the same moment I stole a glance at him, and saw in his face the quick glow of pride which even he could not suppress.

"Women, my dear children, are not so dull of apprehension as some learned folks pretend they are. It struck me instantly that the cause I had so deeply at heart had that instant made a giant's stride, and I was not long in devising a plan to take advantage of the situation.

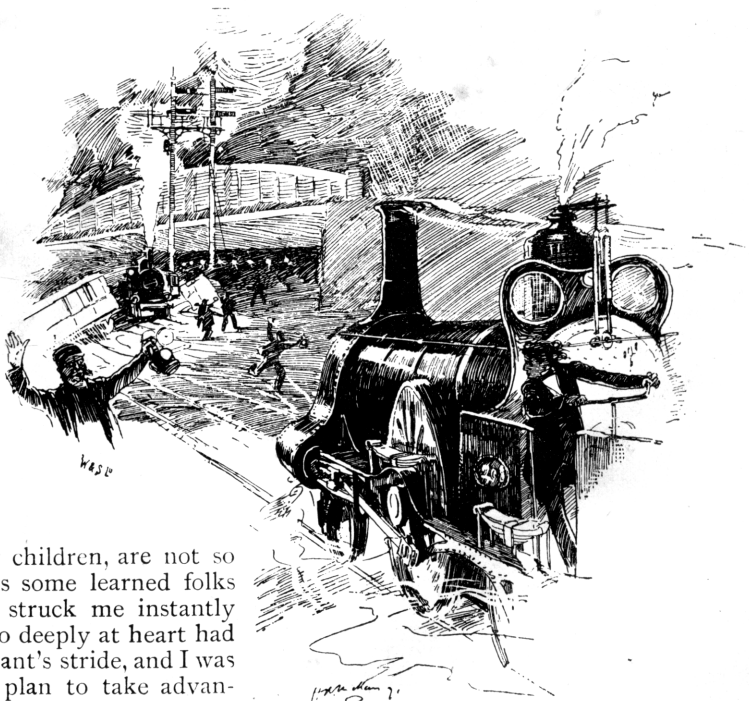
"I need scarcely say that my brother and

I had always kept up the most affectionate communications with each other, and, during the years which followed his marriage, we had often met, though I carefully concealed the fact from my father's knowledge.

"I was well aware that my brother had made his way in the world by his own unaided exertions, and that he was highly esteemed by all who came into contact with him, socially or professionally. I knew too, that in the helpmeet he had chosen he had happily found a most excellent and devoted wife, admired and respected by all who were acquainted with her good qualities.

"On the night of the memorable dinner-party, I went to bed with a serene and contented mind, firmly convinced that a very short time would suffice to bring my plans to a successful issue. I was determined that the enemy should surrender at discretion, arms and baggage.

"We were just then at the beginning of Christmas week, and the greatest festival of the year fell on a Wednesday. On the previous day, my father, who was always most punctilious in the observance of the old-fashioned English Christmas, including



"THE YOUNG MAN SUCCEEDED IN STOPPING THE TRAIN."

a substantial English Christmas dinner, called me into his study.

"Now then, Maggie, my dear," he said with a cheery smile, "I want to consult my little girl on a matter of very serious importance. Of course, you haven't forgotten that to-morrow is Christmas? Now, my pet, listen; I am going to ask your advice."

"My advice, papa? Surely you must be joking!"

"Not at all. In fact, I don't mind telling you in strict confidence that I'm at my wits' end, and it will be very kind of you to give me the benefit of your sage counsel. An intimate friend of mine has a charming daughter—a gentle, affectionate, devoted little girl who loves him, and he is very

you like, Maggie, for a Christmas-box?—there!"

"Of course I knew from the beginning exactly what was coming, for it was merely a repetition of a little comedy my father repeated regularly every year at Christmas time. But I raised my eyebrows, in affected surprise, as if struck by the extraordinary novelty of the idea.

"Good gracious, papa! Am I the young lady you mean?"

"What other young lady should I mean, you little puss? Come now, speak out, and don't be afraid! I feel in a prodigal humour this Christmas, and you must take advantage of your old father's extravagance, my dear."

"Your generous intentions don't surprise me in the least, papa, because I know I am a spoiled child. But——"

"Well?"

"This year I should like you to give me something very, very special."

"What is it, my love?"

"You won't be angry?"

"Angry?" said my father, with a tinge of sadness. "Have I ever been angry with you?"

"No, dear papa, never. Will you promise not to refuse me the Christmas-box I have set my heart on, whatever it may be?"

"That's rather a strong promise, isn't it?"

"Very well, papa. Then I don't want anything."

"Stop, stop! Humph! I will go so far as to promise you anything it is in my power to give."

"Anything?"

"Anything."

"Oh, dear papa, thank you! And I threw my arms around his neck and kissed him on both his bronzed cheeks.

"There!" I exclaimed. "To-morrow, just before we sit down

to dinner, I shall ask you for my Christmas-box."

"To-morrow, Maggie? How am I to buy your Christmas-box to-morrow? Why, all the shops will be closed!"

"Ah, but what I shall ask you for is something you cannot buy! I see you are terribly perplexed, so I will relieve your anxiety by clearing up the mystery. For



"MY ADVICE, PAPA!"

anxious to make her a nice Christmas present. He doesn't quite know what would please her best, and has asked me to suggest something. Now, as you and the young lady are of just about the same age, and I should be glad to oblige my old friend, I thought perhaps you might give me a hint.—Oh, hang long speeches and periphrase!" he burst out, impetuously. "What would

my Christmas-box to-morrow you are to give me two kisses.'

"Two kisses!" he exclaimed, delighted. 'I should rather think they are not to be bought, nor sold neither! If you like, my dear, you shall have them at once, and two to follow before dinner to-morrow. Kisses? That's not much of a Christmas-box for a girl of twenty!'

"Never mind, papa; don't forget I have your promise—the word of a soldier."

"Oh, I'll keep it, never fear!" And then, as he went away, I heard him mutter. 'But, by Jove! I haven't promised not to give the child a better Christmas-box than a couple of kisses!'

"The next day, punctually at four o'clock, dressed in my prettiest frock, I knocked at the study-door, and, in the most impressive tones I could muster, announced, 'If you please, Colonel, dinner is on the table!'

"All right," replied my father, with a smile of satisfaction, 'you see, I am quite ready; and I've got a roaring appetite, in order to do honour to the feast.'

"I am delighted to hear it," I answered. 'Now will you have the kindness to let me conduct you to the banqueting-hall?'

"Stop a minute, my dear. You must first permit me to offer you a little Christmas souvenir, which I have here for the occasion." And, opening one of the drawers in his writing-table, he drew forth a beautiful and costly bracelet, set with pearls, which he clasped on my arm in the most gallant and courtly manner.

"And now," he added, 'this small affair having been disposed of to the satisfaction, I trust, of all parties concerned, it only remains for me to give you the two kisses you asked me for yesterday.'

"Ah! yes, papa, you are quite right; but I didn't say the kisses were for myself. Wait a moment, and you will see!'

"Without giving him time to consider my meaning, I took his arm, and led him into

the dining-room. Scarcely had we crossed the threshold, when a sweet little girl of four summers clasped my father's knee, and, lisped 'Merry Christmas, g'an-pa!' At the same moment a curly-headed, blue-eyed boy of six seized his coat-tail, and shouted, 'Merry Christmas, grandpa!'

"My father stopped short, turned sharply towards me, with brows contracted, and for a moment my heart sank within me. I thought my plan had failed. But the kind old man glanced at the two baby faces, and in an instant the threatened storm had passed away. Stooping, he lifted both the children in his arms and covered them with kisses, whilst I saw two big tears roll down the veteran's cheeks.

"Now or never!" thought I, as I ran quickly to the door and returned, holding by one hand my brother Frederick and by the other his young wife. I must admit it was a most anxious moment for me, as my father looked from me to his son and the woman who had been the cause of their long estrangement. My father's expression was by no means reassuring, and it needed all my courage to speak as I did.

"Father," I said with desperate resolution, 'yesterday you pledged your word as a soldier that you would give me two kisses for a Christmas box. I am here to claim the fulfilment of your promise.'

"For an instant he hesitated. Then, holding out both hands towards my brother, he exclaimed:

"Frederick! My son!"



"IT NEEDED ALL MY COURAGE TO SPEAK AS I DID."

"'Father !' and they were locked in each other's embrace.

"Turning to where Mary stood, with her two little ones at her side, my father said with deep emotion :

"I know now that Maggie's Christmas-box was intended for you. If my white moustache doesn't frighten you, come !"

"She threw herself into his arms, and he imprinted two big, sounding kisses on her cheeks. 'Maggie's gift, my dear—and mine !'

"Mary cried, but her tears were tears of joy and thankfulness. I rather fancy,

indeed, everybody cried a little, but my father pretended to blow his nose violently, and turned the matter off by taking Mary's hand, and conducting her to the place of honour at the head of the table. And never was there assembled together a happier Christmas party than was gathered that day around my father's festive board."

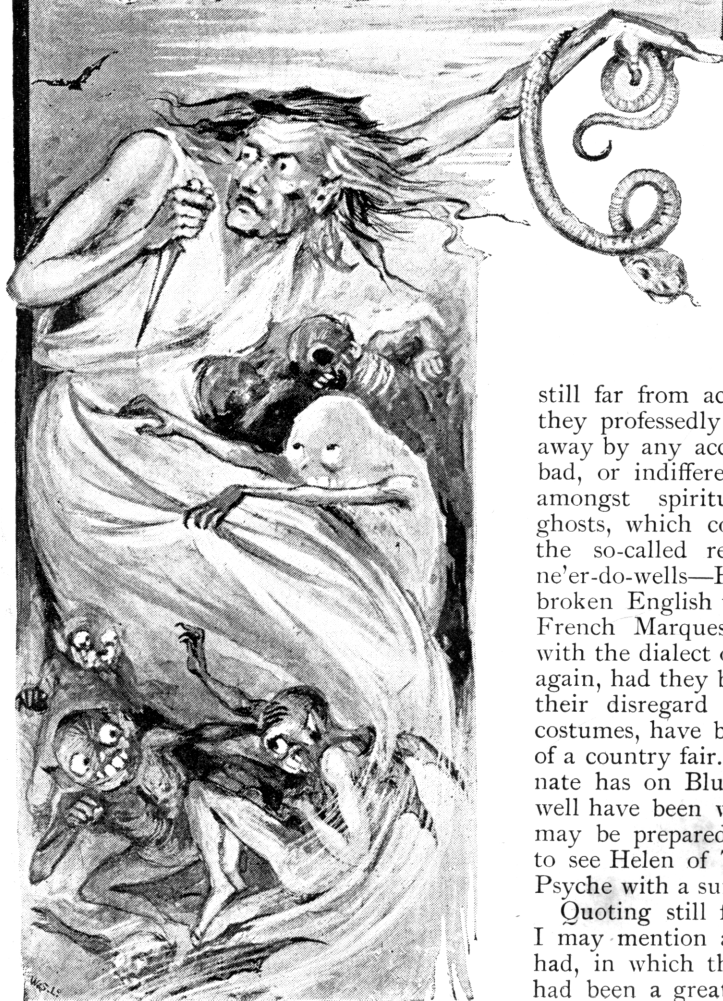
As the old lady spoke these words a loud rat-a-tat-tat ! came at the street door.

"Brother Richard !" we all shouted, in unison.

"And that," said grandma, "is the end of my story."

GHOSTS

BY
IRVING
MONTAGU



HOSTS! How wide a field of speculation does the subject unfold! Personally, I enter on tip-toe on a theme so fraught with weird possibilities. Not so unjust to others as to disbelieve all that I cannot understand, I am

still far from accepting the manifestations they professedly realise, yet cannot explain away by any accompanying motive, good, bad, or indifferent. I have been present, amongst spiritualists at the raising of ghosts, which consisted, in most cases of the so-called reappearance of objectless ne'er-do-wells—Hindoos who have spoken broken English with an Irish accent, and French Marquesses and German Barons with the dialect of the Seven Dials. Some, again, had they been in the flesh, would, in their disregard for the period of their costumes, have been worthy the mummers of a country fair. When a mediæval magnate has on Blucher boots, which couldn't well have been worn before Waterloo, one may be prepared, without undue surprise, to see Helen of Troy in a poke bonnet or Psyche with a sunshade.

Quoting still from personal experience, I may mention a haunted studio I once had, in which the previous occupier, who had been a great friend of mine, and who



IN THE CHURCHYARD.

had died there suddenly of apoplexy, several times appeared to others—people who knew nothing of him, or the circumstances connected with his death, but who, in each case, described his peculiarities to a nicety. When in that studio alone at midnight I confess to having once been to some extent scared by unearthly noises, which seemed to come from the atmosphere round about me. I felt I was on the eve of a spirit manifestation. A bottle of sherry and a glass were at hand—which, by the way, I had not so far touched—my courage was failing me, I would take just one glass; but, no, it should never be said that I, the victim of ghost-fright, had found it necessary to— At that moment came a sound as of a stifled groan from the other end of the studio. I could stand it no longer. I poured out a bumper, and drank it to the dregs. This was immediately followed by a chuckle—a peculiar and well-remembered chuckle—in the mid-air. It was unmistakably the voice of my dead friend. He had been one too many for me. I had invested in that libel on a brave nation—"Dutch courage"—in spite of myself.

Still touching on points which apply to myself, I may say that twice in my life has my own ghost been met and interviewed, once in England and subsequently in Spain, as the following extract from a letter from my old friend Edmund O'Donovan, the late well-known special of *The Daily News*, will testify:—

"You remember Mrs. Temple and her

two daughters here in San Sebastian. Well, a few nights since the eldest dreamt that you were picked off while plying your pencil for *The Illustrated London News*, and that your ghost would appear to her. . . . Three gentle knocks announced your coming. She hastened to her mother and sister, who were amused at her folly, till those three gentle knocks were repeated. Then, in great trepidation, the folding doors leading to the landing were thrown open, and all three declare they saw, standing before them, the vapoury image of yourself, wearing your Boina in approved Spanish fashion, as you wore it many a time and oft at the front. Creepy, isn't it?"



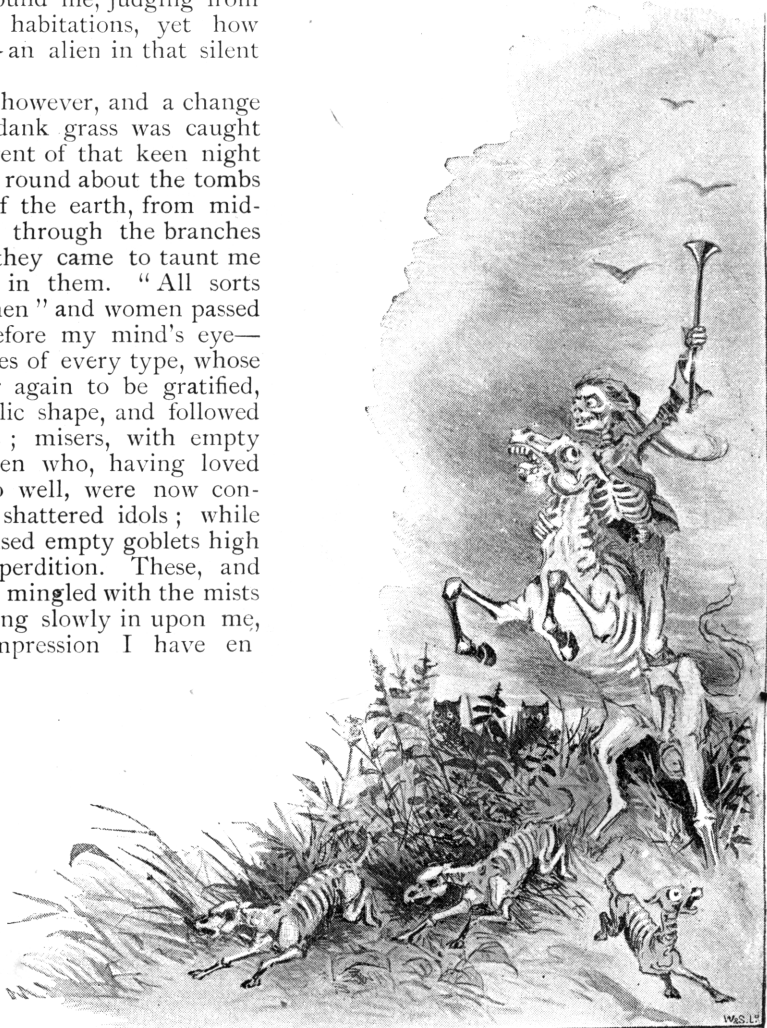
It seems to me that the Old World family ghost is a sort of hall-mark of respectability. It's the next best thing to having come over with the Conqueror. There could be no ghosts without ancestors. By the way, talking of ancestors, what a thrilling topic tombstones might be made ! One evening late last September I was wandering alone round about the tombs in a country churchyard not ten miles from town. The shadowy twilight was deepening into night, a funereal yew casting its broad, black, outstretched limbs athwart the flat-topped tombs, as if to protect their mouldering tenants from the chill breezes which now and again came sighing and sobbing through its interlacing branches. They were a goodly company around me, judging from these monumental habitations, yet how utterly alone I felt—an alien in that silent Campo Santa.

A moment later, however, and a change came. The long, dank grass was caught in the eddying current of that keen night air, and the shadows round about the tombs took shape. Out of the earth, from mid-air, and struggling through the branches of that giant yew, they came to taunt me with my disbelief in them. "All sorts and conditions of men" and women passed in silent review before my mind's eye—gamblers ; profligates of every type, whose evil passions, never again to be gratified, had assumed symbolic shape, and followed them to the spheres ; misers, with empty money-bags ; women who, having loved wisely but not too well, were now confronted with their shattered idols ; while bibulous sprites raised empty goblets high in air to pledge perdition. These, and many more besides, mingled with the mists of night, now closing slowly in upon me, conveying the impression I have endeavoured to give in my sketch, and which, as far as the lingering light would admit of, I drew in that same churchyard.

A few days later—still goblin-hunting—I ran to earth a veritable demon huntsman, the legend of whose wild quest is said

to be the basis from which "The Isle of Dogs" and "Barking" (two neighbouring London suburbs) take their names.

In old times the forest of Hainault, overrunning this part of Essex, lost itself in a swamp of Thames mud. The story is of a handsome young huntsman and his bride, who elected to spend their wedding-day boar hunting. Foremost in the chase, this Di Vernon of the period, forgetful in her excitement of impending pitfalls, dashed wildly on till she found herself beyond reclaim sinking, slowly but surely, in the quagmire from which now no escape was possible. Her lover—alas ! too late to be of service—plunged gallantly into the slushy expanse, and was also lost in his effort



"THE SKELETON HORSEMAN."

to save his impetuous young bride. On this sad honeymoon is based the superstition that a skeleton horseman, on the boniest of steeds, is to be seen o' nights in this locality ; in fact, that—

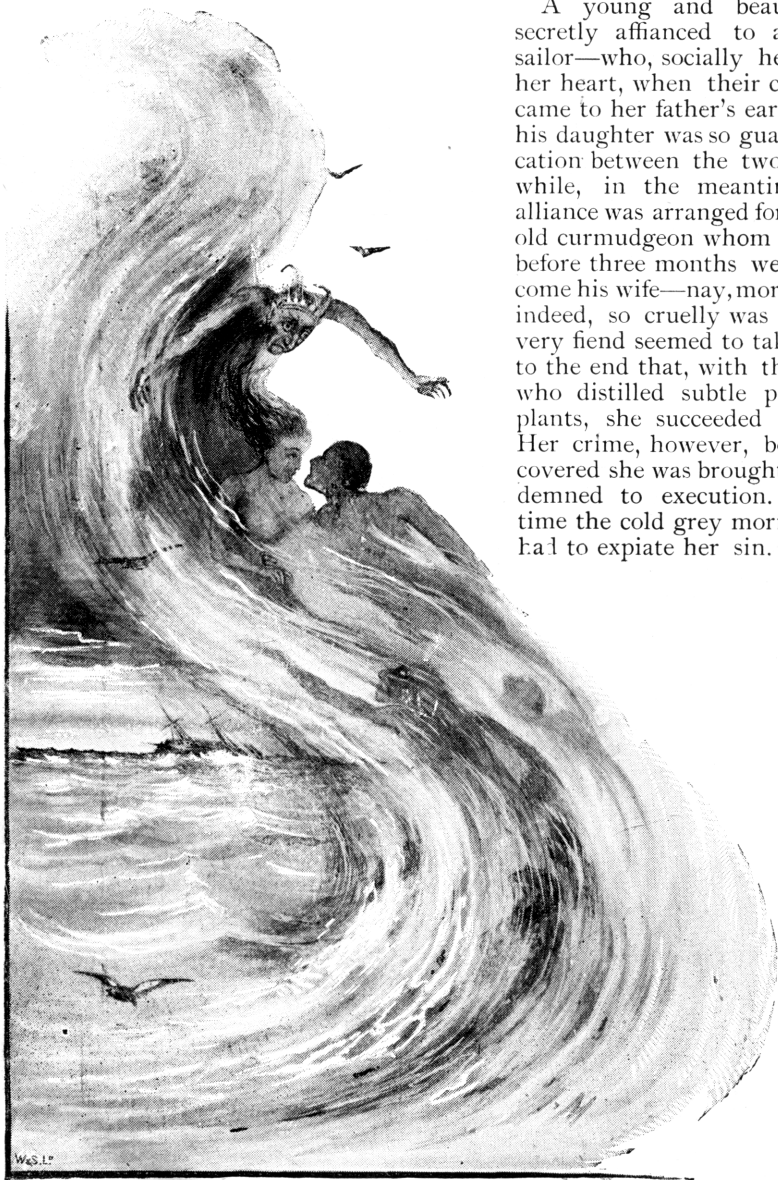
"A hideous huntsman's seen to rise,
With a lurid glare in his sunken eyes ;
Whose bony fingers point the track,
Of a phantom prey to a skeleton pack,
Whose frantic courser's trembling bones
Play a rattling theme to the hunter's groans ;
As he comes and goes in the fitful light,
Of the clouded moon on a summer's night.

Then, a furious blast from his ghostly horn
Is over the forest of Hainault borne,
And the wild refrain of the mourner's song
Is heard by the boatmen all night long,
That demon plaint on the still night air,
With never an answering echo there."

Of the earth earthy as this story of the then dismal swamp of Hainault is, it may be well to find in a storm-wave a fresh element for our next subject. Up to a certain point historical, its termination was also vouched for at the time by all the survivors of the ill-fated vessel it concerns.

A young and beautiful woman was secretly affianced to a comely youth—a sailor—who, socially her inferior, had won her heart, when their clandestine meetings came to her father's ears. Then it was that his daughter was so guarded that communication between the two became impossible, while, in the meantime, a matrimonial alliance was arranged for her with a wealthy old curmudgeon whom she detested. Thus, before three months were over she had become his wife—nay, more—his veriest slave ; indeed, so cruelly was she ill-used that a very fiend seemed to take possession of her, to the end that, with the aid of an old hag who distilled subtle poisons from certain plants, she succeeded in murdering him. Her crime, however, being ultimately discovered she was brought to justice and condemned to execution. In due course of time the cold grey morning came when she had to expiate her sin. She had but one

last request to make, and this was granted—it was that her sailor lover might accompany her to the scaffold. This sad journey accomplished, at a sign from the executioner the two embraced "for the last time," when they were heard to make a half whispered compact which ended in mutual assurances, in a louder key. "You will," said the dying woman, whose smile was even now bewitching ;



"IN THE MIDST A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN,"

"you promise me you will?" "I swear it," replied her heartbroken swain, who was now assisted down the scaffold steps, while the woman, apparently unconcerned, turned to meet her fate.

Three long years rolled on, and the next scene in this strange life-drama was that of a vessel helplessly, and almost hopelessly, floundering in the trough of a tempestuous sea, amongst the crew of which was the young sailor whom we last met at the "Gallows Tree." Every moment did the captain, as the storm increased in violence, expect his craft to be submerged. Yet the hurricane knew no abatement, wave after wave overlapping each other with fresh fury, till one huge billow, snapping the masts fore and aft like matchwood, and rebounding from the deck, shot upwards like a waterspout, till it seemed lost in the thunder clouds above. Now some hours later, when the gale had somewhat subsided, it was discovered that the young sailor had been spirited away, and, moreover, from that day to this, has never been heard of. "Washed over-board," you would naturally say, and so should I if I hadn't the testimony of the whole of that ship's crew to the effect that the devil himself rode the waves on that fearful occasion, surrounded by a posse of fiends who bore in their midst a beautiful woman, who, with the magnetism of love, drew her sailor sweetheart to her arms, whisking him

from the deck of that shattered vessel into the obscurity beyond. There is, I understand, a prosaic reading of this legend, from which the more poetic may have been taken, or *vice versâ*.

However this may be, let us, without more ado, hurry off in a flight of fancy to Rosewarne Hall. What?—you never heard of it—never heard of the Ghost of Rosewarne? Then follow me closely, remembering at the same time that it is no business of ours how Ezekiel Grosse, the lawyer, became possessed of the fine



"THE MISER'S GHOST."

old estate of that name. He had at least secured it in its entirety, ghost and all, nor was it long before this family phantom (a hoary-headed and miserly Rosewarne), put in an appearance. It was in the drive, the third night after Ezekiel Grosse had come into possession, that he was first accosted. "Follow me," said the spectre, as he led the way to a lonely hollow in the adjacent wood, "Dig, and you will find," and he pointed to a huge moss-grown stone. "There will you see the accumulated hoard of Roger Rosewarne, the miser. I am he. In life I sent the poor and needy penniless from my door, and damned them for their impertinent supplications, for which I am doomed to experience the pangs of starvation throughout endless eternity, unless the hidden treasure be wisely dispensed!"

The next moment the bewildered lawyer found himself alone. It's needless to say that, before many days had passed, the whole of that buried wealth had been transferred by him to his own private coffers, and was soon being expended, regardless of the ghost's warning, in the wildest extravagance. Gallants more famed for their profanity than their wit, accompanied by powdered and painted beauties, now held high revel in those ancestral halls, more especially on one Christmas Eve, when, as the clock struck midnight, the lights grew dim and blue, and the miser's ghost, in a phosphorescence all its own, appeared slowly descending the broad oaken staircase, cursing, as it did so, the founder of the feast, who, squandering in debauchery his easily-acquired gold, condemned, by doing so, the perturbed soul of the Miser of Rosewarne to walk the earth to all eternity.

A certain clergyman, detained late one night at a friend's house, accepted, unhesitatingly, the offer of sleeping accommodation in the only disengaged room—the haunted chamber. Now, as the reverend gentleman made it a practice never to travel ever so short a distance without some abstruse theological work in his pocket for perusal at odd moments, it is not surprising that on this occasion he sat up till after the witching hour; indeed, it was nearly one o'clock a.m. when, in a complete but threadbare mediæval suit, the vapoury spirit of yet another miser—a skinflint ancestor of the clergyman's host—appeared before him, whom the ready-witted parson at once interviewed somewhat as follows:—

"Pardon me, sir, you are, doubtless, a resident in this neighbourhood?"

"I am!" replied the somewhat flabby phantom in sepulchral tones.

"Ah! just so. You *live*, if I may be allowed the expression, in this house; have done so, in fact, for some time past?"

"Three hundred years."

"Dear me! you don't say so?"

"I do."

"And have subscribed, naturally, to many local charities—eh?"

"Devil-a-bit," said the skinflint's ghost, clutching the bag of sovereigns he carried more closely to his bony sides. "Devil-a-bit, sir."

"Well, then," replied the cleric, "you'll pardon my saying so, I know, but don't you think it's about time you did?" and with this he politely presented a subscription list for the renovation of the parish church. "You will see," he went on, "I have here the names of some of the most influential——" He could proceed no further. The smell of sulphur was simply unbearable, and the miser's ghost was laid for ever. The room has since been converted into a nursery.

Immediately below the sketch which illustrates the preceding anecdote is to be found one of the late lamented Terese des Moulin, of whom our dear old friend Ingoldsby discourses so graphically in "The Black Mousquetaire;" how being haunted o' nights by the ghost of a beautiful nun of that name, whom he had deceived, his brother officers, fearing he would go mad, decided to disillusionise him by introducing into his room, at the hour when his victim was said to appear, none other than her twin sister "Agnes," who continued *also* as a nun, and, playing the part of a ghost, was at a given moment to be unmasked, so that, having been proved to be mortal, his hallucination might be explained away, as a practical joke. The opportunity, however, never came, for at one and the same moment the actual ghost of the injured one appeared, which was visible only to the Mousquetaire himself. She seated herself by the side of her living sister. Now, *two* sisters Terese were too much even for *that* devil-may-care officer. He raised himself in bed, glared at the double apparition, and shrieked, with a weird, almost diabolic halloo—

"Mon Dieu! V'là deux! By the Pope, there are *Two*!" whereupon he immediately collapsed, fell back, and—died.



As to the skeleton, my next sketch, well, the least said about him the soonest mended. He has not always led quite an exemplary life, hence it is that armour has been added, in expiation, to the weight he carries. He is one of the fine old crusted family brands, whose Sunday best suit of mail still hangs at the Hall, while his second quality, much battered, in which he did all his dirty work with the Saracens, is buried with him.

The following story of the Spectre Bridegroom is thrilling to a degree. Briefly, it is this:—Nancy Trenoweth, the heroine, was, as a matter of course, young and beautiful, and was, moreover, almost as good as she was attractive. No wonder, then, that young Frank Lenine should have fallen desperately in love with her. Their parents, however, being much averse to the prospective match, took every means in their power to frustrate their assignations; efforts which, for some time, it is needless to say, were unavailing. Before long, however, young Frank was more effectually disposed of, by being sent on a long voyage to the West Indies, which, it was hoped, might cure him of his love sickness. For three long years Nancy yearned in vain for tidings of young Lenine, till it came about that one night, in a heavy gale, a huge merchantman went to pieces on the rocky coast not far from where her parents' cottage was situated. Now, among those who perished was her sailor lover, home-ward-bound to make her his bride.

The finding of the body amongst the drowned, however, was so carefully concealed from her that, even on the day of the funeral, she was unaware of it. What followed?

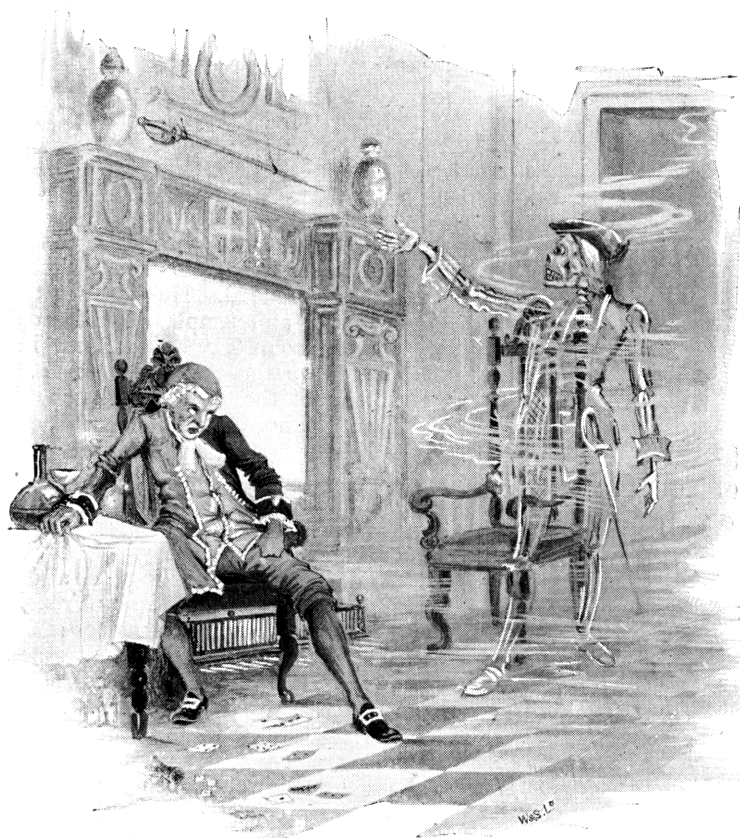
That night when locking up, as was her wont, she peered out of the cottage door into the darkness beyond, and there, to her amazement, she saw Frank, her long lost

marriage should have been solemnised—the ghost of her drowned love hurrying off with her to the spot which had that day closed over his mortal remains. Happily, according to this quaint old Cornish legend, “The village blacksmith intercepted them, and succeeded, by seizing her dress as she was being hurried past him, in saving her from being buried alive with the sprite of

Lenine;” though it really mattered very little after all, as she only survived for two or three days from the horrors of that grim night ride.

Inclined as I am to vary as far as possible place and period, my next uncanny revelation shall concern the eighteenth century, when George the First was King. It is of two staunch college chums who, at about the same age, joined his Majesty's service. Their military careers, however, were destined to have very different issues. One having joined a fighting regiment did prodigies of valour on foreign service for his

King and country, being ultimately killed in the thick of the fight, while the other, in a home regiment, wasted his substance in the wildest profligacy. Now the young hero who had fallen so gloriously was found to have bequeathed to his old friend the sword with which he had won so honourable a name, enjoining him at the same time to prove himself, as a soldier, worthy of the inheritance. Years passed. That sword—now rusting in its scabbard—was suspended with other curios over the mantelshelf of the man who was, as we have seen, a soldier by name only. It was past midnight, This jaded roué having gambled



“THE TWO CHUMS.”

Frank, as she had so often before seen him, mounted on his favourite colt. Turning in his saddle he addressed her in his old familiar voice. He shouted to her to mount beside him, and as he did so leant forward to receive her. In a moment she had leapt into his arms and clasped him about the neck the better to secure her seat. And then—hey, presto!—they were off at a breakneck pace before she could realise the horror of the situation: she was in the clammy embrace of a spectre horseman mounted on a phantom horse which was galloping at full speed towards the graveyard of that same old church where their



•THE WHITE LADY

away his last shilling, was reviewing his misspent life when the door of his room slowly opened, the fire at the same moment emitting a vapour which at first half filled the apartment. Presently, this mist clearing away, there stood before him the stern soldierly sprite of his late companion in arms, which, with its bony fingers, pointed significantly at that rusty scabbard. "In my time," said the shade of the departed in sepulchral tones, "that sword would not have rusted thus: had your life been fuller of honours than of tricks you would have better served your country and your King."

With a hollow groan, the debauchee fell an inert mass, to the ground—he was dead.

Steeped as you and I are by this time in ghostly horrors, we cannot, I take it, do better than seek out a denizen of the other world who has succeeded in preserving her good looks, for to this advantage in a marked degree "The White Lady," better known as Prechta

von Rosenberg, may lay undisputed claim. Prechta, born in 1520, was married when in her teens to Baron von Lichtenstein, who so utterly crushed her young life by his continued cruelty and excesses, that she died while yet in the very heyday of her youth and beauty, and has ever since haunted the estates of the illustrious Bohemian family to which she belongs—sometimes at one castle, sometimes at another—while again she has been known to follow some of its members further afield, having been seen in December, 1628, in Berlin. She is said to affect somewhat scanty vapoury tissue as she floats through space, beckoning invitingly as she does so.

Since time began a belief in the supernatural has existed which was modelled to a considerable extent by the introduction of the Greek and Roman mythologies, the symbolic deities of which were supposed to come down now and again from Olympus to regulate the affairs of men,

while side by side with these we have Hindoo, Persian, and Chinese spirits too numerous to mention, with whom wilder tribes have brought up the rear, accompanied by all sorts of grim monsters.

Then, in later years, came the canonisation of saints, who were for all sorts of worldly ends propitiated, and a belief in whose healing and other powers developed by easy stages into the propitiation of ghosts, fiends, sprites, and hobgoblins of every description. In this short pen and

pencil sketch it has been impossible to do more than glance, in passing, at Ghostland. Yet

the theme has been, at least to me, an interesting one, and may, I venture to hope, afford the readers of THE STRAND MAGAZINE some pleasure as well.



Told in the Studios.

BY "RITA."

STORY THE THIRD—"NOT A MODEL."



HE third artist had not yet spoken.

He had always been somewhat of a mystery since he had been among them. By birth a Swede—by right of domicile and long residence almost as English as an Englishman, Helsinborg was already well known in art circles as a man of great genius. Pitiless, almost to cruelty, in the scathing truths he set forth upon his canvas, he was more feared than admired, even by those who praised him most loudly. He had only rented his studio for six months, as he was engaged upon a sea piece, representing a wreck on the Cornish coast.

It was finished now, and on the morrow he was to send it away for exhibition. As Norman Druce ended his story, he glanced up at the group who were regarding him expectantly.

"I fear there is nothing among my sketches worth speaking about," he said, and lifted a large portfolio from the floor as he spoke. "But you can see and select for yourself," he added, handing the case to Denis O'Hara.

The young Irishman seized it eagerly, and, sweeping the table clear from those it already contained, he emptied the portfolio of its contents, while the two other men drew near, and looked over his shoulder.

For a few moments there was silence, broken here and there by disjointed sentences and exclamations. At last Denis, still acting as spokesman, turned to the silent figure by the fire, and held out a sketch. "We have selected this," he said.

The artist looked at it a moment. A dark shadow seemed to flit over his usually pale, impassive face.

"Was that among them?" he asked, hoarsely. "I had no idea;—I mean," resuming his usual composure, "the sketch is not mine, I only copied it from a friend's picture."

"But it has a story," said Jasper Trenoweth, quietly. The eyes of the two men met. Little as they had seen of each other, little as they knew of each other's

history or life, yet both seemed to recognise instinctively that in that history and life there lived the memory of some tragic past, something that for both had turned the sunshine to darkness—the joy to pain.

"Yes," said Helsinborg gravely, "there is a story—a somewhat painful and tragic one. I am not sure that I ought to tell it; but perhaps it will not matter now, the actors in the drama are both dead."

He laid the sketch down gently, almost reverently; but the dark shadow on his face seemed to grow darker, and the firm mouth seemed a little tremulous.



"HE EMPTIED THE PORTFOLIO."

"The picture," he said, "shows you an almost empty room, bare of everything save an easel, on which stands a picture. At the foot of the easel lies a woman, stretched on the bare floor—dead. It is called 'Not a model.' As far as I know, this is the story of it.

"When I was young and unknown, and fame was still a dream, I was staying in Paris with a friend, a countryman of my own, and a member of my own profession. We were young, we were enthusiasts, we were very poor, we worked hard, and I think we were very happy. It is so easy to be happy when one has youth, and strength, and hope; when life is full of dreams, and all is innocent and beautiful, and its mysteries have no menace, and its hopes no disillusion. Such a time is very brief. The gods perchance envy us, and soon draw the veil aside and show us that happiness is a myth, and innocence a dream, and love but an illusion, and fame the breath of envy forced to distil its gold, and only valuing what it purchases by weight of the world's coinage. And in that world there seems no truth, and no honour, only corruption and vileness. Men's lives and days are spent in greed and selfishness, and all noble dreams, and high endeavours, and all loveliness and purity and simplicity of life are of no account. But in the days I speak of we two dreamers and enthusiasts believed still in such things as honesty and purity, in unsullied fame and noble aims that the world must acknowledge and reverence. We were fools, you say; no doubt. But we did not know it then, and so were happy, though poor, and often even hungry and shelterless. But we always dreamed that dream of the world's acknowledgment, of the triumphs of success. We did not know that success meant the chicanery of knaves, the puff and clamour and brazen advertisement that gold alone could command, the endless subterfuge and tricks by which man outwitted man in the race, the prostitution of the highest gifts for the base wages of popularity. No, we did not know that then, and we were so unwise as to labour still in the cause of all that is divine and beautiful and God-given in art, believing the world would accept such teaching. We were rightly served. We starved. For myself I cared but little for hardships and troubles. I was strong, and had been reared by a hardy race; but he, my friend, was different. Less robust of frame, less capable of endurance; and, as money grew

scarce and winter approached, I grew uneasy and fearful for his strength. To make matters worse, he fell in love. The girl was certainly lovely enough to make any folly excusable. She was an actress, playing small parts in a small theatre—a shallow, soulless thing, but beautiful as a dream; and my friend believed in her, and worshipped her with all the ardour of his nineteen years. Just when his love fever was at its height a sudden stroke of luck befel him. Some wealthy aristocrat saw a picture he had sold to a Jew dealer for a few francs. Struck by its merit, he took the trouble of tracing out the artist. He gave him a commission, and promised more, if satisfied. The ardent and enthusiastic nature of the youth leaped, in fancy, to the most impossible heights of success. The gold he touched seemed as an inexhaustible mine, and he clenched his madness by marrying the actress, and taking rooms furnished and fitted up in far too luxurious a style for their joint income. I remained in the old garret, painting as I had always painted—hoping as I had always hoped. I felt somewhat lonely at first, for I missed Christian terribly. I knew he would drift away from me, it could not be otherwise. Women's friendships seem rather cemented than interfered with by marriage; but a man loses his friend when that friend becomes a husband. I did not like the girl, and I felt she did not care for Christian as he did for her. But I said nothing, I only kept apart and waited. I had not long to wait. Christian took to dropping into the garret as of old; he seemed to need sympathy and companionship. His gay spirits were gone, a settled melancholy was visible in face and manners. His work was neglected, the commission which his wealthy patron had given him was still unfinished, and all the ardour and excitement he had been wont to bring to the design and execution of any work seemed lost and forgotten. I grew seriously uneasy, the more so as the usual frank confidence between us had changed to reserve and sullenness on his part, and he would tell me nothing of his troubles. Well, I won't dwell upon this part of the story. The end came to his love dream. He woke up one day to find he had been tricked and deceived. The girl whom he loved so madly repaid him by forsaking him at the first breath of poverty. She went off one day with the wealthy patron, leaving him no word of farewell, asking no forgiveness—fitting like



"HE COULD ONLY SIT AND BROOD."

the soulless butterfly she was to the sunshine and brightness offered by wealth. He came back to the old bare garret, and the old hard life. He could not work, he could only sit and brood listlessly day after day, or break out into passionate fits of rage and despair. At last he became very ill. I nursed him back to life; but when he rose from that bed he was utterly changed. Aged as if by years; sad, hopeless, embittered. That was a woman's work. How often and how successfully she has done it! I got him away from Paris at last, and we came to England. I had a little money, and I worked—not for art's sake, but for his—at those popular trifles which have no merit save that they 'sell.' That word had only the merit of necessity for me; but it was another's necessity, and I worked for him, and still hoped. Years passed. Success came slowly and grudgingly to both of us. We lived together, and tried to believe we were content, and had won something better than the fairy promise of our youth, and the illusions of its dreams of fame. One day Christian confided to me that he was unable to procure a satisfactory model for the picture he was engaged upon for the next Academy. It was to be a very large one, the subject was ambitious and needed careful treatment; and, as I

listened to his difficulty, I agreed that it would be almost hopeless to expect from any professional model such a combination of qualities as he desired.

"Suppose you advertise," I said. "State exactly what you require—it is sure to be answered."

"After some consideration, he decided to do so. Needless to say, he had many answers and applications; but none were suitable. That evening, however, as we were sitting at work, making the most of the brief daylight left to us, a knock came at the studio door. It was opened, on our invitation, by a woman, who stood hesitating a moment

as if she did not like to enter.

"Pray come in," I said, laying down my brush. "What is it we can do for you?"

"I—I saw your advertisement," she said. Her voice was low and hurried, and she spoke with a foreign accent. "I am not a model; but if I could serve—if I could suit you—"

"Her face was veiled; I could only see the flash of dark eyes, the loose masses of dusky hair.

"It is my friend who requires a model," I said. "It is not necessary that you should have sat professionally before. It is expression he desires, and—"

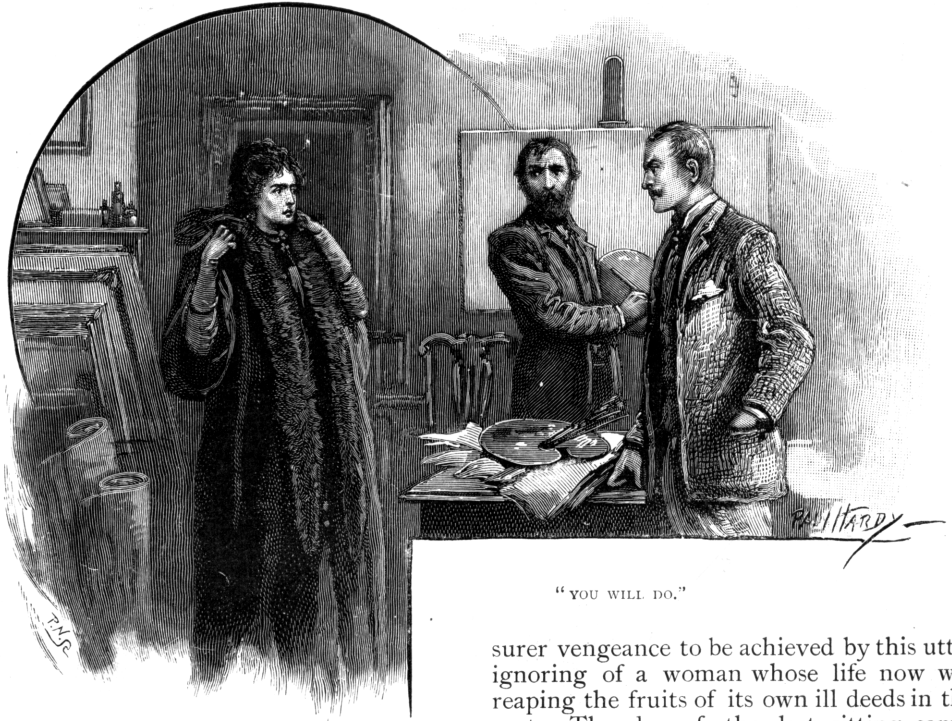
"Oh," she cried, clasping her hands with a passionate gesture. "That surely would not be *difficile*. I have been actress—*comédienne*—*chanteuse*. I think it is in me to express what monsieur desires."

"Christian came forward then and looked at her. I thought his face seemed strangely pale in the waning light of the sunset. The woman threw back her veil. I started as I looked. Young as was the face, great as once might have been its beauty, it was painfully haggard and lined, marred by suffering and passion, bearing only too plainly the stamp of sin and evil living. Christian looked at her silently for a moment. He asked no questions, only bent

on her that searching, steady gaze which seems to reach the soul. Whether it reached hers, whether any memory came back to her as she met those cold stern eyes, I cannot tell. She did not speak, only stood there as if mesmerised into silence or fear.

"You will do," said Christian, suddenly. "Your face is all I want; the history of sin, and wasted years, and suffering, and retribution. Come here to-morrow at two o'clock. Your terms?"

dered that he, who was usually so courteous and gentle to women, should be always so *brusque* and stern to her. Well, the picture grew and approached completion, and the memory that had so long haunted me took at last a deeper shadow of certainty. I did not speak of it, I dared not; but it seemed to me impossible that Christian should not know whom he was using as a model. Was there—I asked myself—some purpose beneath that pretence of ignorance, some



"YOU WILL DO."

"That is for monsieur to decide," she said low and faintly.

"He named a sum that to me seemed extravagant, but I said nothing. As for the woman, she dropped her veil, and, with a murmured, 'Adieu, messieurs,' glided from the room.

"I wondered what fleeting memory, what ghost of the past that brief glance had recalled, but the reality evaded me again and again. She came the next day, and for many days after, and every time I saw her the same vague uneasiness, the same fleeting memory troubled my mind. My friend alone said nothing, but worked steadily, doggedly on, and she was singularly reticent for one of her sex and profession. I thought she seemed afraid of Christian, and I won-

surer vengeance to be achieved by this utter ignoring of a woman whose life now was reaping the fruits of its own ill deeds in the past. The day of the last sitting came. When he at last made the signal of dismissal, she came over and looked timidly at the easel.

"May I see it?" she asked; "the picture, I mean."

"Certainly," he said coldly, and stepped aside so that she might face the picture as it stood there in the full light. I watched her, wondering and fascinated. She looked at it a long, long time; her face was very pale, her great eyes had a sombre, vengeful look.

"What do you call it?" she said at last.

"He smiled, as he wiped his brushes in a cool, indifferent fashion. Had he no thought, no regret, no fear for that living, passionate piece of womanhood, whose very soul and secrets he seemed to have laid bare

on that canvas, as pitilessly as a vivisector uses his victim.

"'I call it,' he said, 'Retribution.' Do you like the title?"

"She only looked at him, drawing her shawl closely round her still beautiful figure; a shudder shook her from head to foot.

"'You are very merciless,' she said, and turned away; then paused, and looked back ere she reached the door. 'Take care,' she said, 'that I too may not be as merciless—that I too may not have revenge.'

"He made no sign of hearing. Calmly, indifferently as ever, he went on wiping his brushes and putting them aside for the day.

"As the door closed, I turned to him. 'Christian,' I said, 'don't you know who she was? How could you keep up that pretence of ignorance and indifference?'

"'I have known all along,' he said, 'who she *was*; but that woman died years ago—for me. This, this poor painted ghost has no name and no existence in my life, or memory. Why should she?'

"'And you used her—'

"'I used her to tell her own story to anyone who looks on—*this*,' he said, pointing to the picture. 'Fate gave me a better revenge than I could have demanded.'

"'It seems cruel,' I said, looking at the canvas, where the living story of the living woman spoke out in merciless fidelity.

"'No,' he said, 'it is only just.'

He left the studio then, but I remained for long, studying every detail of that work of his, whose subject he had chosen with no thought that the real heroine should also be the model.

"It was simple; but it told a story, as all

his pictures did. A room luxurious, but not pretentious. In the middle of the room stood a man. His face was half averted; but the figure—and the slight glimpse of that stern and handsome profile were eloquent with a determination as strong as death—relentless as justice. At his feet knelt a woman, her face agonised, despairing; the young haggard misery of it haunted one despite oneself. The loosened masses of dark hair swept the ground. Her clasped hands, her strange, imploring eyes, her parted lips that seemed tremulous with life, all spoke out appeal—appeal for mercy—for forgiveness; while on the face, with its lost youth and its feverish passions and haggard beauty, was stamped indelibly the history of a past where she had wronged, and he suffered.

"The gesture of his outstretched hand that thrust her aside as some loathsome evil thing, the mute disgust and stern relentlessness of his whole attitude spoke out like a living voice. One heard it, and wondered what could have been the wrong that never would bring her forgiveness; yet, even while wondering, seemed to guess the truth. I looked at it until my eyes grew dim. So many years, and yet his wrecked youth, his wasted love had brought him vengeance. How deep a hold that one brief passion must have taken on his life, and memory; even now, at this distance of time, it could arm him



"AT HIS FEET KNELT A WOMAN."

with strength to teach others the lesson he had learnt in the first years of youth and faith. I turned away at last. In some vague way I felt sorry for the woman whose vanished beauty, and evil life, and sore need, had left her at the mercy of

the man she had first wronged, the man who held the power to give her story to the world, even as he had shown it to herself. Calmly, coldly, with merciless fidelity, with never one word or hint of consciousness as to who she was, the artist had completed his study. The wronged husband spurned the guilty wife as remorselessly as she had once forsaken him. It was just—he had said so; but I found it in me to wish that justice were less cruel.

* * * * *

"It was still early next morning when Christian came to my room.

"I find I have mislaid my key of the studio," he said. "Will you lend me yours?"

"I am just going there," I answered. "We may as well walk together."

"The studio was but a short distance from where we lived. To this day I remember that morning—the soft air, the budding green of the trees, the scent of spring flowers. Ah! if human life could but renew itself as nature does! . . . But I must hasten on. We reached the studio. I stopped in some consternation.

"Why, Christian," I said, "your key is in the lock! How careless!"

"He looked disturbed.

"I have no recollection of leaving it there," he said; "and you were the last to come away, you remember."

"True," I said, "and I certainly closed and locked the door as usual."

"We spent no more time in words. A vague presentiment of evil oppressed us. In silence we hurried into the room. My first glance was for the picture. It stood there in the full glare of the morning light, tragic, wonderful as ever. But on the bare wooden floor beneath I saw outstretched a woman's prostrate figure. We sprang forward. A cry of horror burst from Christian. Face downwards on the floor she lay, half veiled by masses of loosened hair, her hand clasping a sharp and shining blade; her face, as he raised it, white and calm, set in the frozen peace of death.

"We raised her, and laid her on the couch, but even as we did so we knew that

there was no hope. Her life's history had ended here, where its first chapter of retribution had been written by the man she had wronged.

"When the first shock of horror was over, and the medical verdict had been pronounced, I noticed that on the table there were some sheets of paper, closely written, and placed together. They were not addressed, but I drew Christian's attention to them, feeling certain they were meant for him. He read them silently, sadly, perhaps with something of regret at last. When he had finished, he folded them together, and turned to me.

"You can guess, of course," he said. "She came here determined to destroy that picture; full of hatred and revenge. She writes here of all that was in her heart from the moment that she saw herself on that canvas. Some softer feeling, however, seems to have stolen over her as—she wrote—some memory of our youth, our love—for she did love me, just for a brief space, as well as it was in her to love anyone. She leaves off abruptly, as you see. I think she must have gone over to the picture for one more look. The knife was in her grasp. Whether she faltered in intent, or whether, as the doctor says, the heart's action suddenly ceased under the effects of fierce excitement, we shall never know. There she lies—powerless now to plead for or receive forgiveness."

"You would not grant forgiveness, Christian," I said sadly, as I covered the calm, dead face; "yet, you see, it was not in your hands to give—retribution."

The speaker paused, and looked round at the grave and silent circle.

"That is all," he said, "only Christian did *not* send that picture for exhibition. It stood from that day in his studio, in a recess veiled by a heavy curtain. I think no one save he or I, ever lifted that curtain, or knew the history it hid from all the world, whose praises he has won, whose fame is his, at last, when he neither needs nor knows of it."

FINIS.

An Unpublished Letter of



CHARLES LAMB.

TO C. CHAMBERS

Sept. 1, 1817.*

[It is probable that many attentive and earnest admirers of ELIA, if they were to be told that that admirable man and writer was entitled to a place among those who may be considered the modern disciples of Apicius, would ask a little time to consider and refer, before they agreed with such a proposition. In his earlier and poorer days, Lamb, so far as we can make out, had few opportunities of indulging in the pleasures of the table and the palate. But as his means improved, and his circle of friends widened, we easily discover evidences of his appreciation of certain delicacies, which in some cases showed his taste for such matters to be as idiosyncratic as his views about books. Almost the very latest of his essays was a contribution to the *Athenæum* called "Thoughts on Presents of Game," and as early as 1810 he exhibits an entertaining gusto on the subject of a pig, which had been sent up to him as a present by the Hazlitts from Winterslow. The series of notes to *Alsop* deals considerably with acknowledgments of oblations of game and "shining" birds; and scattered through the friendly correspondence are numerous hints that Lamb was by no means indifferent to toothsome dishes and flavorful *bonnes bouches*. The hitherto unprinted letter, which I give below, is addressed, as may be perceived, to "Mr. C. Chambers," of Leamington, and is a masterpiece of descriptive humour and opulent fancy. Canon Ainger has inserted in his edition of the "Letters" an expurgated text of a long letter to "Mr. John Chambers," whom he introduces as a colleague of Lamb in Leadenhall-street. That these were two different persons appears tolerably evident, for the present communication is not only endorsed as I have stated, but bears upon its face the testimony that the Christian name of the recipient commenced with the same initial as the writer's. They were possibly relations. The letter given by Canon Ainger was as undoubtedly sent to "John" Chambers, for I have taken the pains to verify that point. This is, however, a critical question, which may be reserved for another place and occasion.—W. CAREW HAZLITT.]



WITH regard to a John Dory, which you desire to be particularly informed about—I honour the fish, but it is rather on account of Quin who patronized it, and whose taste (of a *dead* man) I had as lieve go by as any body's (Apicius and Heliogabalus excepted)—this latter started nightingales' tongues and peacocks' brains as a garnish).

Else in *itself*, and trusting to my own poor single judgment, it hath not that moist mellow oleaginous gliding smooth descent from the tongue to the palate, thence to the stomach, &c., that your Brighton Turbot hath, which I take to be the most friendly and familiar flavor of any that swims—most genial and at home to the palate—

Nor has it on the other hand that fine falling off flakiness, that oleaginous peeling off (as it were, like a sea onion), which endears your cod's head & shoulders to some appetites, that manly firmness, combined with a sort of womanish coming-in-pieces, which the same cod's head & shoulders hath, where the whole is easily separable, pliant to a knife or a spoon, but each individual flake presents a pleasing resistance to the opposed tooth—you understand me—these delicate subjects are necessarily obscure.

But it has a third flavor of its own, perfectly distinct from Cod or Turbot, which it must be owned may to some not injudicious palates render it acceptable—but to my unpractised tooth it presented rather a crude river-fish-flavor, like your Pike or Carp, and perhaps like them should have been tamed & corrected by some laborious &

* This date is not in Lamb's hand; probably it was supplied by the recipient.

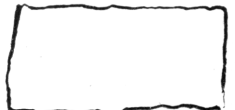
well chosen sauce. Still I always suspect a fish which requires so much of artificial settings - off. Your choicest relishes (like nature's loveliness) need not the foreign aid of ornament, but are when unadorned (that is, with nothing but a little plain anchovy & a squeeze of lemon) are then adorned the most. However, I shall go to Brighton again next Summer, and shall have an opportunity of correcting my judgment, if it is not sufficiently informed. I can only say that when Nature was pleased to make the John Dory so notoriously deficient in outward graces (as to be sure he is the very Rhinoceros of fishes, the ugliest dog that swims, except perhaps the Sea Satyr, which I never saw, but which they say is terrible), when she formed him with so few external advantages, she might have bestowed a more elaborate finish in his parts internal, & have given him a relish, a sapor, to recommend him, as she made Pope a Poet to make up for making him crooked.

I am sorry to find that you have got a knack of saying things which are not true to shew your wit. If I had no wit but what I must shew at the expence of my virtue or my modesty, I had as lieve be as stupid as * * * at the Tea Warehouse. Depend upon it, my dear Chambers, that an ounce of integrity at our death-bed will stand us in more avail than all the wit of Congreve or * * * For instance, you tell me a fine story about Truss, and his playing at Leamington, which I know to be false, because I have advice from Derby that he was whipt through the Town on that very day you say he appeared in some character or other, for robbing an old woman at church of a seal ring. And Dr. Parr has been two months dead. So it won't do to scatter these untrue stories about among people that know any thing. Besides, your forte is not invention. It is *judgment*, particularly shown in your choice of dishes. We seem in that instance born under one star. I like you for liking hare.

¹ So in the original. Query Bye, one of Lamb's colleagues.



I esteem you for disrelishing minced veal. Liking is too cold a word. I love you for your noble attachment to the fat unctuous juices of deer's flesh & the green unspeakable of turtle. I honour you for your endeavours to esteem and approve of my favorite, which I ventured to recommend to you as a substitute for hare, bullock's heart, and I am not offended that you cannot taste it with *my* palate. A true son of Epicurus should reserve one taste peculiar to himself. For a long time I kept the secret about the exceeding deliciousness of the marrow of boiled knuckle of veal, till my tongue weakly ran riot in its praises, and now it is prostitute & common.—But I have made one discovery which I will not impart till my dying scene is over, perhaps it will be my last mouthful in this world, delicious thought, enough to sweeten (or rather make savoury) the hour of death. It is a little square bit about this size in or

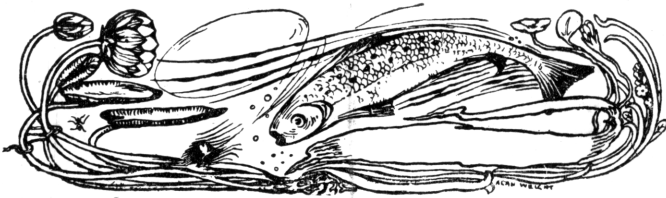


near the huckle bone of a fried joint of * *
 * * * * * fat I can't call it nor lean neither
 altogether, it is that beautiful compound,
 which Nature must have made in Paradise
 Park venison, before she separated the
 two substances, the dry & the oleaginous,
 to punish sinful mankind ; Adam ate them
 entire & inseparate, and this little taste
 of Eden in the huckle bone of a fried
 * * * * * seems the only relique of a Para-
 disaical state. When I die, an exact de-

scription of its topography shall be left
 in a cupboard with a key, inscribed on
 which these words, "C. Lamb dying
 imparts this to C. Chambers as the only
 worthy depository of such a secret." You'll
 drop a tear. * * * * *

[Endorsed:]

Mr. C. Chambers,
 Leamington,
 near
 Warwick.



Major Pendallas.

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

BY FRANK R. STOCKTON.



ON December 24, 1880, I was standing in a little American country railway station, in a state of perplexity. Near me, sitting in a chair by the stove, was a young lady, also in a state of perplexity. Facing us both stood the station-master, who had been in a state of perplexity, but was getting out of it.

way to join a Christmas party at the house of her uncle, Mr. Dolliver, some seven miles from the station, and I, invited to the same house, had been delighted to meet her on the train. We were good friends, and had studied art together in Paris. When we left the city in a morning train, a little snow was beginning to fall, and as we journeyed northward we found the snow-fall heavier and heavier, and we had arrived at this little village of Boynton at three o'clock in the afternoon, an hour behind time.

From Boynton to the Dolliver house we were to go by a stage coach, but the stage driver had left more than an hour previously, hurrying away before his ordinary time of starting, for fear the road would be blocked up before he could get to his home, a good twelve miles away, and assuring himself that there would be no passengers for him on such a day.

It was reasonable enough that we should be perplexed, for we could not see, nor at first could the station-master see, how we were to get to our journey's end that day. If we would wait until next day, he told

us, the stage driver would be back in a sleigh. He said he would be sure to come—for Christmas packages, if not for passengers. But we could not wait until next day. It would be better to return to the city in the next down train, if, happily, one should come. We could not hope that the Dollivers would send for us, for if they saw the stage pass without stopping, they would be sure



"I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO FOR YOU."

"Just you wait here ten minutes," he said, "and I'll see what I can do for you," and putting on a fur cap and an ulster, he went out of doors.

The state of the case was this: Miss Welden, the lady by the stove, was on her

we had not come by the train. The station-master was a good man, and did his best to get us out of our trouble. He had doubts about another train coming down that day—it was a branch road with one track—and he thought it would be a great pity if the Dollivers should be deprived of the company of two of their Christmas guests; a lot of them had come up the day before. Nobody in the village made a business of hiring out vehicles or carrying passengers, but an idea had struck the station-master, and he had gone out to see what he could do with it.

In about a quarter of an hour he returned.

"Well, sir," he said, "there is just one thing you can do. There isn't anybody in this village who will go to Dollivers' to-day, for there is no chance of getting back to-night, but the man who keeps the store here, Mr. Peter Chase, has got a horse and sleigh, and if you choose to hire that of him, and do your own driving, I think you can get it, if you are willing to pay him something extra, for he'll have to send a man over to-morrow with the stage driver to bring it back; and besides, in rough times like these, people always charge something extra."

I put the matter before Miss Welden, and she did not hesitate to say that, rather than take the risk of being obliged to remain in the village, where there were no accommodations for strangers, she would

take the risk of letting me drive her to the Dollivers'.

"It is only seven miles," she said, "and if the horse is good enough, I don't see what there is to happen."

I tramped through the snow to Peter Chase's store, and quickly arranged with him for the hire of his horse and sleigh.

"Five dollars may seem a good deal, sir," he said, "for a trip like that, but this is a pretty deep snow, and we all ought to remember that Christmas comes but once a year. I'll have the sleigh round at the station in ten minutes."

In half an hour a little sleigh, drawn by a big brown horse, came up to the back door of the station.

"I would have been here sooner," said Mr. Chase, "but it was a good while before I could find the bells, and I knowed you wouldn't want to take a Christmas sleigh-ride without bells."

I did not complain of the delay, although I had been getting dreadfully impatient. The station-master had had a telegram from up the line, stating that a down train with a snow-plough was on its way, and I was very much afraid that Miss Welden would conclude to wait, and take this train back to the city, so without loss of time we bundled in. The Christmas-minded Mr. Chase had brought two heavy fur robes; our valises were packed in behind, the sleigh being of the box variety, and we were ready.



"A JOLLY SLEIGH-RIDE."

"There is no mistaking the way," said Mr. Chase. "You go straight ahead until you come to the house."

"Which I know perfectly well," added Miss Welden, and away we jingled.

The snow was still falling, but we did not mind that, and now that we had started off, I was glad that Mr. Chase had waited to find the bells. Their merry jingle suited my spirits well. A jolly sleigh-ride with Clara Welden was more enjoyment than I had counted on for this Christmas.

A young man and a young woman, both of lively dispositions, good friends, fellow-workers, and nothing more, are much more likely to have a merry time in a case like this, than if they were a pair of lovers, or even if one of them were a lover. True love implies a certain seriousness, and is not infrequently conducive to demureness.

The snow was deep on the road, and sometimes drifted, but the sleigh went through it well enough. The horse, however, probably not a very good traveller on the best of roads, made but slow progress. But although he was an animal of deliberate action, possessing, as Miss Welden thought, an æsthetic turn of mind, which made him object to destroy the virgin smoothness of the snow with his great hoofs, he was strong, and that was the main point. With reason to believe that we should safely reach our journey's end, it did not trouble me that we were making that journey slowly, and my companion appeared to be of my way of thinking. The beauty of the snow-decorated forests, fields, and hills was enough to make our artists' hearts satisfied, even if the horse should decline to do more than walk.

It began to grow dark, and we had not reached the hospitable mansion to which we were bound, but there was a beautiful weirdness in the snow scenes softened by the dusky light, and our hearts and the bells were still merry. But as it grew darker and darker, we both began to wish that we stood in the light and warmth of the Dolliver house. I whipped the horse, who made a few bounds through

the snow and then relapsed into his former trot. It was of no use to try to hurry him.

Several times Miss Welden had assured me that she was not in the least anxious, and that she was sure we should now reach the house in a very short time; I think she was about to say something of the kind again, when suddenly she exclaimed, in a voice that had a ring of hearty cheerfulness in it, very different from her previous expressions of thoughtful encouragement—

"Here it is. Didn't I tell you? We are at the very gate."

Sure enough, there was the gate with a lamp on one of the posts, and there in the midst of its whitened grounds was the house, its windows lighted, and a lamp on the piazza.

When I pulled up to the door I attempted to bound from the sleigh, but my bound was a poor one, for I found my legs were somewhat stiffened by the cold. As I



"AN ELDERLY WOMAN STOOD IN THE PORTAL."

helped Miss Welden to alight, I could perceive she was not nearly so active as I had generally known her. The door opened before we had time to reach it, and an

elderly woman, with a Christmassy look about her, which was absolutely warming, stood in the broad portal.

We stopped on the piazza before entering, stamping and shaking ourselves, for we were two figures of snow.

"Our valises are in the back of the sleigh," I said, and to my surprise my teeth chattered a little as I spoke. "I think the horse will stand until someone takes him."

We then went in. Suddenly Miss Welden stopped, and looked from right to left, and turning to the good woman, she exclaimed:

"This is not Mr. Dolliver's house?"

"Of course not," said the other, "did you think it was? Major Pendallas lives here."

Miss Welden and I looked at each other in dismay.

"We have made a mistake," I said. "How much further on is it to the Dolliver place?"

"It isn't farther on at all," the woman replied, "it is not on this road at all."

"It is too bad," I said, "they told us at Boynton it was a straight road, and we could not miss it."

"So it is, but three miles below here there is a fork that anybody might mistake, especially at night, with the roads unbroken. But come in and get warm, you must be half frozen. I'll have a man throw a blanket over the horse;" and with this she showed us into a large room with a wood-fire blazing on the hearth. She pushed two chairs before the fire.

"Sit down," she said, "and get a little warm. If I am not mistaken this is Miss Clara Welden. Yes, I thought so. It's been a long time since I have seen you. I am Mrs. Bardsley. I keep house for Major Pendallas. Excuse me for a moment."

"What a grand thing this fire is," said I, "and who is Major Pendallas?"

"I never saw him in my life," said Miss Welden, following my example, and drawing up closer to the fire, "but I have often heard of him. He used to be in the army, I think, and now he has a stock farm, and has all sorts of fine horses and cows. I

wonder if he would be willing to send over to my uncle's? I can't bear to think of starting out again in that sleigh, and with that horse."

I was glad she did not include the driver in her objections, and said I hoped that the Major would be able to do something for us. But at the time I did not give much thought to the subject, for my whole soul was occupied in revelling in the genial heat. I had had no idea that I was so cold.

In about five minutes the door opened, and a tall, broad-shouldered man, wearing a heavy pea-jacket, and an unmistakable air of being the master of the house, entered the room. He was middle-aged, had side whiskers, and bright blue eyes. We both



"HE GREETED MISS WELDEN."

rose, and with outstretched hand he greeted Miss Welden.

"Delighted to see you," he said, in a hearty tone. "Mrs. Bardsley tells me you have lost your way, but that doesn't matter, I'll make that all right."

Then he turned towards me, and Miss Welden introduced me.

"Ashmead?" he repeated, as he grasped me by the hand.

"Yes," I replied, "Henry G. Ashmead."

As I spoke he gave me a quick look, and

seemed about to say something in reference to my name, but he checked himself, and urged us to sit down again.

"What you must do now is to get warm—get warm," he said, and he put two great logs on the fire.

With a few quick questions, and without sitting down, he made himself acquainted with the situation. For a moment he gazed down upon us, and then he said, "The first thing to do, now that you are a little thawed, is to get off your coats and wraps."

"That is hardly worth while," I replied, "for as soon as we are well warmed, we must get on, in some way or other, to the Dolliver house."

"Sir," said Major Pendallas, "there is no Dolliver house for you to-night. Here you

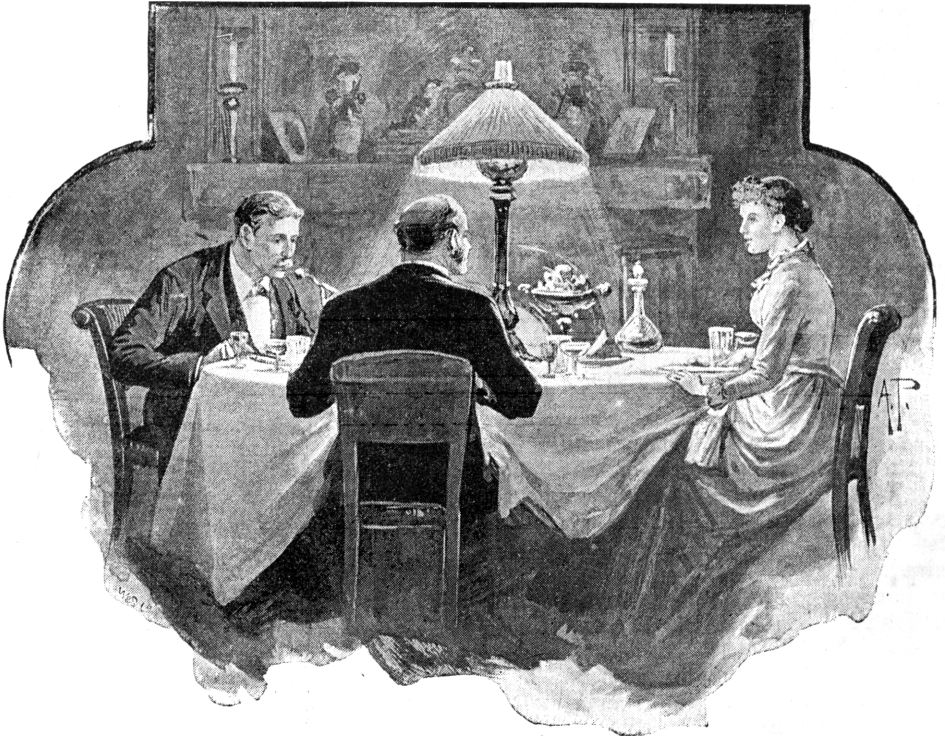
blowing now as well as snowing, and I am not going to let a young lady go out into a storm like this, especially when she has had already as much as she is able to stand of that sort of thing. Your bags will be brought in, and your horse put in the stable. Mrs. Bardsley will take charge of Miss Welden. I'll attend to you, sir, and supper will be ready in half an hour," and without waiting for an answer he left the room.

We looked at each other and laughed.

"That is just what I hoped he would do," said Miss Welden. "I have had all the sleighing I want for this day."

"Good," I cried, throwing off my overcoat; "I feared I might have to persuade you."

"That is really absurd," she said; "as if



"WE THREE SAT DOWN TO A BIG ROUND SUPPER TABLE."

are, and here you stay. It is three miles back to the main road, and then you would have two miles more to go, and before you reached the Dolliver house there is a long hollow, and at this present moment the snow is probably drifted five feet. If you had taken the right road you most likely would have been in that snow-drift now. I have sleighs and teams enough, and no doubt I could pull you through, but it is

the storm and Major Pendallas were not quite enough."

In five minutes Miss Welden had been carried off by the beaming Mrs. Bardsley, while Major Pendallas conducted me to a bedroom on the ground floor, in which I found a crackling wood fire. The house was a large one, and seemed to be lighted from top to bottom.

We three sat down to a big round sup-

per table, and, as might have been expected, the meal was bountiful, hot, and most grateful and cheery to the two storm-beaten travellers, who had eaten nothing since breakfast except an unattractive luncheon on the train.

Our host did most of the talking, and we were well content to let him do it.

"You cannot imagine," he burst out, as soon as we were seated, "how glad I am to have you two people here. I expected to spend this Christmas Eve absolutely alone, and I should have felt that, for I never did anything of the kind before, and, from a boy, I have thought more of Christmas Eve than of Christmas Day. There is less of a strain in it. On Christmas Day you feel as if you ought to be awfully jolly, because if you don't, you won't have another chance for a year. On Christmas Eve one can be jolly without thinking of it. If there are any shortcomings they can be made up next day. Last year my niece was with me, and we had plenty of company; but now she's married and cleared out, utterly. Gone to Europe with her husband, and intends to stay there. But the storm has been good to me. Let me give you a piece of this chicken, sir, and some butter. This is Christmas butter, especially made from the cream of two cows, both granddaughters of the great Cavalier George."

The Major's anticipation of a truly jolly Christmas Eve was interfered with by Miss Welden, who declared, shortly after nine o'clock, that she was so fatigued by her day's experiences that she would be obliged to bid us good-night. When she had gone, the Major and I each lighted a cigar, and drew up before the big fire in the parlour.

"I can't help being disappointed," said he, "for I intended to get up a lot of games, and have Mrs. Bardsley and her daughter in. They are very respectable people, and at Christmas time we always have them in at the games. But bed is the best place for Miss Welden, after what she has pulled through this day. And I am so rejoiced to have you both in the house that I shan't grumble. It doesn't matter in the least that when the sun set to-day I had never seen either of you, nor you me. I know who you are, and you know who I am—at least, Miss Welden knows, and that's enough."

"But you don't know me," I said.

"Indeed I do," he exclaimed, slapping one of his spread-out knees, and leaning

toward me. "I know you in the best kind of a way. I have one of your pictures. Now, don't go and say you are not the artist, Henry G. Ashmead."

"I am that man," I replied.

"I didn't doubt it," said the Major, leaning back in his chair, "you look like it. I am a bachelor, sir, and it takes a good deal to keep that sort of a man content and easy in his mind. Pictures and books help a lot in that way, and I make it a point every year to buy a good picture. I got one of yours last fall, and I am very fond of looking at it. Come with me, and I'll show it to you."

The Major then preceded me to a medium-sized room in the front of the house, which he called his reading-room.

"It isn't a study," said he, "for I never study; and it isn't a library, for it hasn't books enough for that; but it is as good a room to read in as I know. A fine light, and always cool in summer. There is the picture," and he held up a lamp before one of my large landscapes.

"I thought Burnet owned that," I exclaimed.

"Yes, he did, but he's been hard up lately, and had to sell off part of his collection. I snapped up that as soon as I saw it. There are things in that picture that you seldom see in paintings. That's timothy grass in that meadow, and a cut about the end of June would make hay worth about twenty dollars a ton. It's ready to cut now," said he, "and from the looks of the leaves on the trees, and the size of those mullein plants, I should say it was in June that you took it."

"I made my studies in June," I replied.

"Good," he cried, "I knew it. There's no nonsense about that meadow, such as you would see in most pictures. No bushes and straggling briars, or patches of red clover, and orchard grass. I am a straightforward and practical man, and I like a straightforward and practical picture. Of course, you couldn't help the daisies, and no more can I in my own meadows. Now, then," said he, when we were again before the fire, "you can see for yourself how I know you, and I can tell you that it delights me to have in my house the man who painted that picture. After awhile I'll brew a bowl of Regent's punch. But it isn't late enough for that. We'll have a bachelor night of it. By next Christmas, I suppose, the young lady will put a veto on bachelor nights."

"Veto," said I, "what do you mean?"

"You will surely be married by next Christmas," he replied.

"Married!" I exclaimed, with a laugh. "We have never thought of being married."

The Major took his cigar from his mouth, put his hands upon his knees, leaned forward, and looked at me.

"Do you mean to say, sir, that you and Miss Welden are not engaged to be married?"

mad it has always been better for me in the end. Now would you mind telling me if that young woman is engaged to somebody else, or if you are? Don't get angry. If anybody is angry, I ought to be."

I was not in the least offended. There was an impetuous but kindly earnestness about the man which impressed me very agreeably. There are some people whose liberties are pleasant rather than otherwise. The Major was one of those people.

"I am not engaged," I said with a smile, "and I have no reason to believe that she is."

Major Pendallas thrust his hands into his trouser pockets, strolled to the other end of the large room, and, then turning, came back and sat down.

"I believe," said he, "that the man who lives alone does more thinking to the minute than other people. When she was pouring out the coffee to-night, and you were handing your cup to her, and both of you were laughing about

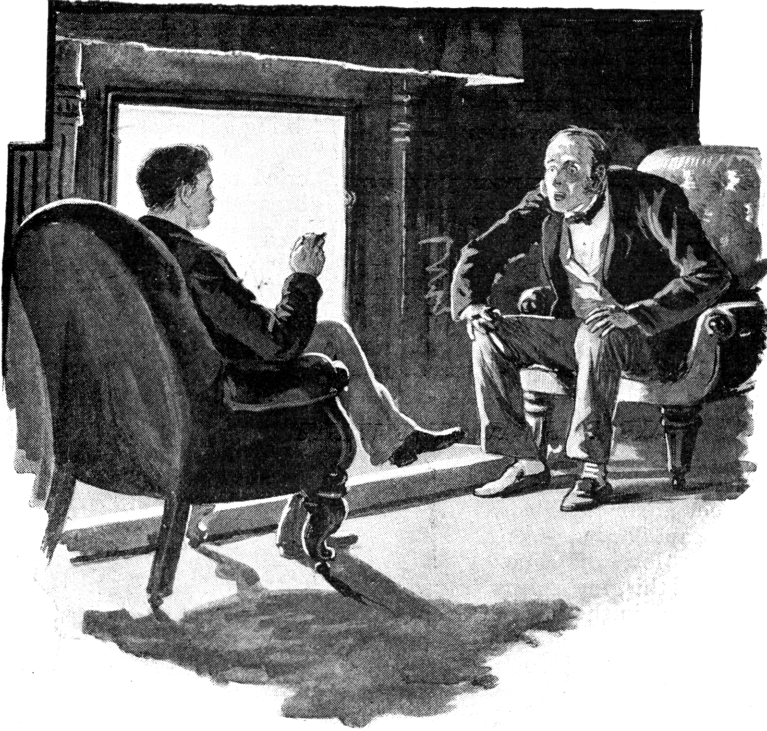
the sugar, I stopped eating and I said to myself, 'That is as perfect a match as I ever saw.' And in regard to human beings it is very seldom that I think that. And now you turn around and tell me that you and she go single."

I could not help laughing at the serious way in which he discussed the subject.

"I am sorry to disappoint you," said I, "but Miss Welden and I are not marrying people. For myself, I cannot afford matrimony."

"That's what I once thought," he said, "and for thirty-five years I have regretted that I was foolish enough to think so."

It was plain that my host was a man of nervous temperament. He could not sit



"THE MAJOR LEANED FORWARD AND LOOKED AT ME."

"Not at all," said I, "we have known each other a long time, but we are friends and nothing more."

"Well, I'll be hanged!" cried Major Pendallas, throwing away his cigar and rising abruptly from his chair. Then, standing with his back to the fire, he looked down upon me.

"Now I am disappointed. I surely thought you two were a team, and a fine one. I had made up my mind to it, and now I am set back. I feel as if I were driving a big Percheron and a polo pony. I'm a practical, common-sense man, and I don't mind asking practical, common-sense questions. I have done that all my life, and though I have made a good many people

still while considering this subject, evidently of deep interest to him. He now rose, folded his arms, and looked at me steadily for fully a minute. As he gazed at me, his eyes seemed to grow brighter and larger. "It was my intention to make a business proposition to you, founded on what you and Miss Welden said about this part of the country, and how much you liked it. I considered it one of the happiest thoughts I had ever had."

"What was it?" I asked, a good deal amused, but careful not to show it. "I shall be glad to hear it, whether I can accept it or not."

"All right," said the Major, seating himself with decision, "you shall have it. I will make the proposition in the common-sense, straightforward manner in which I intended to make it. For over ten months I have been kicking and fuming at being obliged to live here in this lonely house. To-night I said to myself over and over again, 'What would I give if these two would eat all their meals with me; would come here and live in this house?' And then I said, 'Why shouldn't they? He's a landscape painter, and they would want to live somewhere in the country, and are not likely to find any place more beautiful than this. Now, perhaps, that's just what they want, and what they are looking for, and the best thing you can do is to make them the offer without loss of time.' While I was thinking of this, my spirits went up to about a hundred in the shade, but when you told me you were not an engaged couple, down they went, I don't know how far."

"What did you intend to offer?" I asked.

"Offer!" he said, "everything. I intended to put at your disposal, as soon after you married as you pleased, the handsomest room in the house, second floor front, with a beautiful flower garden in summer, directly under the side window. I would have given you the run of this house, reading-room and everything, and made you feel at home; if the lady is a musician, I would have bought a new piano; if you are fond of riding or driving, my stables should have been at your service. I have to pay men to exercise the horses, and it would be a favour to me to have you do some of it. Moreover, I have a carriage-house on the other side of my garden, which I do not use, and I would have fitted it up as a studio for you, with a

big north light and all conveniences. Then, again, if you would have liked to come here to spend your honeymoon, I would have vacated the place for a month, and let you have it all to yourselves.

"For the accommodations I should have offered you, I should have charged you no more than what your living would cost me. Certainly not over seven dollars a week each. For the rent of my studio, I should have asked you one landscape picture every year."

I was most cheerfully impressed by the project thus laid before me.

"My dear sir," I exclaimed, "you are generous, indeed. Will you make me the same offer if I bring some other lady here as my wife?"

"No, sir," cried the Major, striking his knee with his broad hand; "no, sir, I will not. I know all about Miss Welden, and I have formed a great fancy for her. I will run no risks with outside and unknown women."



"HE LOOKED OUT INTO THE NIGHT."

So saying, he rose abruptly to his feet, walked to a window, raised the shade, and looked out into the night. I remained gazing into the cheerful fire. The enthusiasm of this man had had a powerful effect upon me. I was actually thinking

what a delightful thing it would be to marry Miss Welden.

It was not the first time that this thought had come into my mind, but it had always been promptly expelled. As I told my host, I was not a marrying man, at least, I considered that my financial circumstances gave me no right to be one. But now the state of affairs seemed to be entirely changed; so far as pecuniary considerations were concerned, there was no reason why I should not be married to-morrow, and the perception of this fact set me in a glow. The Major now returned to the fire.

"Hello," he cried, "your face looks as if you were getting converted."

"It may be that I am," I said. "You are a powerful preacher."

He stepped quickly towards me, and clapped his hand upon my shoulder.

"Now," he said, "you are in the right road; don't hesitate; don't look to the right or the left; don't stop to consider; don't reason, but go straight ahead, and ask that young woman to be your wife. The fact that you are beginning to feel converted shows that you want her, and indeed I should have a very small opinion of you if you didn't want her. Ask her to-morrow morning; ask her here in this house before you go into that crowd of Dolliver's, where you will have no chance at all. I'll see to it that you have every chance here."

"Major," said I, rising, "I have the greatest mind in the world to do it. You have put before me opportunities which I did not suppose to exist; you have stirred up feelings in me that I thought were long ago conquered and quieted; you have——"

"Now, my dear boy," interrupted the Major, "don't say another word. Go to your room while you are in this mind, go to bed and go to sleep. Don't consider this or that, or any other thing. Keep your mind on the one fact that you are going to propose to Miss Welden in the morning. Above all, don't think about me. Don't imagine that perhaps I'm not going to suit your fancies. I will give you my word that if I don't suit, or can't make myself suit, I'll clear out. I'll take the risk of all that."

"Very good," said I, "I'll go to my room, for it is past country bed time, and I'll keep my mind on the subject you have brought up before me. But what of that Regent's punch you were going to brew?"

"Not a drop, sir, not a drop," exclaimed the Major. "When men want cheering up, and have nothing to do afterward, a

glass of punch on a winter night is a very good thing, but in a case like this we want clear heads. Anybody can determine to marry almost anybody if he drinks enough punch. When I set out to drive a pair of horses in a storm or on a cold, chilly night, I never touch a drop of spirits; no matter how much I feel that I need warming up at such times, I want to be sharpened, not comforted. But when I get safely home I mix myself a glass of something hot. Making up your mind at this time is much more important than driving any sort of horses in any kind of weather. The punch can wait until to-morrow, and if things turn out all right, I'll brew something out of the common, I assure you."

In my bedroom that night I gave no time to deliberation. Before I bade the Major good-night I had made up my mind to propose to Miss Welden.

I was downstairs before breakfast the next morning, and I met the Major just coming in from a visit to his stables.

"Merry Christmas," he cried, "and isn't this a glorious day—sun bright and sky clear? But the snow is about a foot deep on the level, and nobody knows how deep in the drifts. I have a Canadian in my employment who walks on snow shoes, and I have sent him across the country to the Dollivers to tell them where you are, and let them know that you will be there in the course of the afternoon. I'll send out some men with a double team of oxen and a snow plough, to break the road, and after luncheon I'll drive you over myself. In the meantime, how are you going to spend the morning, sir?"

I laughed as I gazed into his earnest countenance.

"I am going to try to break a road into the region of matrimony," I replied.

The Major's face shone like the morning sun.

"You're sound as a dollar!" he exclaimed. "After breakfast you two shall have this house to yourselves. I'll carry off Mrs. Bardsley and the rest of them to the Christmas-present business in the big barn. I suppose you can get through in an hour?"

"Oh, yes," I answered, "probably in less time."

The Major was now called off, and I strolled into the reading-room to look again at my picture. The room was full of the morning light, and as I turned to the wall on which my landscape hung, I stood

with eyes and mouth open—the paper on the wall was one designed by Clara Welden. I remembered when she was working on it in her studio. There was a tendril running through it which I had suggested. I clapped my hands, and felt like bursting out with a shout of pure enjoyment, but I restrained myself. The breakfast bell rang, and as I went out I closed the door behind me.

Miss Welden came down refreshed and lovely, and, as we exchanged Christmas salutations, I almost felt guilty in thinking of the conspiracy which we two men had hatched up against her, but I did not in the least swerve from my purpose.

It was about an hour afterward, when Miss Welden and I were sitting before a blazing fire in the parlour, that I declared my love for her, that I asked her to be my wife; and, in the ardour which increased as I spoke, I told her everything. I laid before her the whole glowing picture which Major Pendallas had painted for me.

When I began to speak, she looked at me in a quizzical way, as if she were amused at the sudden outcropping of my passion, but afterwards she began to listen with interest, as if it were due to me to give serious consideration to a matter which I urged so warmly, odd as it might be that I happened to be urging it just then. But when I told her what the Major had been talking about, her face flushed with indignation.

"It is a shame," she exclaimed, "that that man should discuss me in such a way! What right has he to meddle with my affairs, or give advice concerning me? If I can do it, I will leave this house this instant."

"You cannot do it," I said, "and I beg you will restrain your anger, until I explain the case. Major Pendallas takes a great interest in me on account of my work. You remember what he said at breakfast about my picture. He has taken——"

"I don't care anything about his interest in you," she interrupted. "I am thinking about myself. He has no right to take any interest in me—to discuss me. It is the most unwarrantable thing, the most——"

"Please do not say anything more against him," I implored. "I first want you to look at my picture. It is one of the few you have not seen."

"I don't want to see anything he owns," she said, sharply.

"But I beg of you to come and look at this, because I painted it. You may never have another chance, and I very much want you to see it."

She had a kind heart, and, angry as she was, she accompanied me to the reading-

room. As we stood before the picture, her eyes wandered away from it, and over the wall. Then she turned and looked at me, and I looked at her, but said nothing.

"Do you suppose," she asked presently, "that he knew I designed this paper?"

"I am positive he does not," I replied, "for if he had known it, he would certainly have mentioned it to me, and beside, it is almost impossible that he should

know it."

"It is wonderful," she said, in a softer tone. "What do you make of it?"

"I make this," I replied. "The soul of that man is in sympathy with yours, and with mine. The things we do touch his



"IT IS A SHAME!" SHE EXCLAIMED.

tastes and his sensibilities. He covers his wall with your paper, and he hangs my picture upon it. He does not know either of us, but his soul is in sympathy with us. I think you can hardly say that he has no right to take an interest in you."

She looked at me and smiled.

"That is all very pretty," she said, "but rather sentimental."

"Not a bit too much so," I exclaimed. "Clara, I think you cannot any longer be angry with our host, and having set him aside, will you not consider me——"

"And consent to be a background to your work?" she asked. There was a bright sparkle in her eye, which made me feel justified in gently closing the door.

When Major Pendallas returned from the big barn, where, according to his custom, he had been making Christmas presents to all his people, he found Clara and me in the parlour. He approached us in a somewhat hesitating way, and as I looked around at him I could see an expression on his countenance which looked like a fear that he had come back before I had gotten through with the business of the morning, or perhaps before I had begun it. But as we both rose to meet him, I still holding Clara's hand, all doubt vanished from his handsome, honest, weatherbrowned face.

"I know it," he cried, as he looked from one to the other of us, "I know it. You needn't tell me anything," and he stretched out a hand to each of us. "This is a glorious Christmas," he said, "a glorious Christmas." It was plain he wanted to say a good deal, but could not find words, but Clara allowed no embarrassing silence.

"I have been very angry with you, Major," she said, with the kindest of smiles upon her still slightly flushed face. He looked at her inquiringly.

"It was because you were making all sorts of arrangements for me, without my knowing a word about them."

"Oh, that was because he didn't understand about the wall-paper," I said. "If he had known about that——"

"About what?" exclaimed Major Pendallas.

We two laughed, and then we took him into the reading-room. When all was explained to him he exclaimed—

"Upon my word!" and then, with his hands thrust deep into the pockets of his short coat, he turned about, and deliberately gazed upon the four walls of the room.

"Truly," he cried, "I can't take it in. To think that the two years I have been sitting in this room, surrounded by these warm, bright, delicate colours, these flowers of spring, these soft leaves, and these graceful spirals, this general impression of blossomy air, and then to think that you did it—I can't comprehend it. Why, I'll tell you, madam, when I went with my niece to a great city store, where they had thousands of patterns of wall-paper, I picked out this one in ten minutes; and, although there were a half-dozen others she fancied, I would have none but this for my reading-room. 'It is the flowers and air of spring,' I said, 'and I want to have it always around me.' I thought I liked you, madam, on account of what I had heard of you, and because of looking at you and listening to you; but that wasn't all—no, that wasn't all."

There was a moisture in Clara's eyes as she held out her hand to him.

"It is most marvellous and most charming," I said, "and I can see only one objection to the state of affairs—the picture should have been Clara's, and the background mine."

"Not a bit of it," exclaimed the Major. "The picture can be taken down, it can be stolen—lots of things can happen to it, and it occupies only a little space after all; but that beautiful wall is there, and it is here, and all around us; and here it will stay. It will last out my lifetime, and if any accidents happen to it I've got a lot more of it upstairs."

A servant now entered with a letter, which had been brought over from the Dollivers' by the man in snow-shoes. It was written to Clara, and she read it to us. Our friends were evidently overjoyed that we had not remained in the city, as they had supposed, and that we would soon be with them. They insisted that Major Pendallas should come over with us and spend the night. They had a large party of friends at the house, and were having a jolly time.

"Oh, I'll go," said the Major; "I intended to go, anyway; but as to jolly times, the times they are having there are no more to compare with what we are having here than an ashman's donkey is fit to run a three-mile heat with my colt Sapping. But we'll help to make them jolly. I'll take over the big silver punch bowl that I won four years ago, and have not used yet, for I have never had people

enough here to make it worth while. We'll christen the bowl on this happy day, and you, madam, shall have the first glass out of it. And now," continued the host, looking from the one to the other, "before we do any more, or say any more, or think of anything else, I want you to tell me this—are you two going to accept my proposition, and coming to live with me? I don't say anything about winter time, because that may be asking too much; but in the time of the year you would want to live in the country, any-way?"

"My dear Major," said Clara, "we have been talking about your proposition, and I don't see how we can help accepting it."

"Good," cried the Major, "good, better, best. I remarked before that this is a glorious Christmas, and I repeat the statement. Look you, the sun is beaming out of doors almost as brightly as we are beaming in here. There is a broad path cut to the stables, and I want to show you a sorrel mare with the most beautiful tail and mane you ever saw. I am going to have her put into training to carry a lady, and she is to be at your service, madam, whenever you want her; and as for you, sir, there are my stables. And if a beautiful country and fine horses help to make people happy, I think you will have no fault to find."

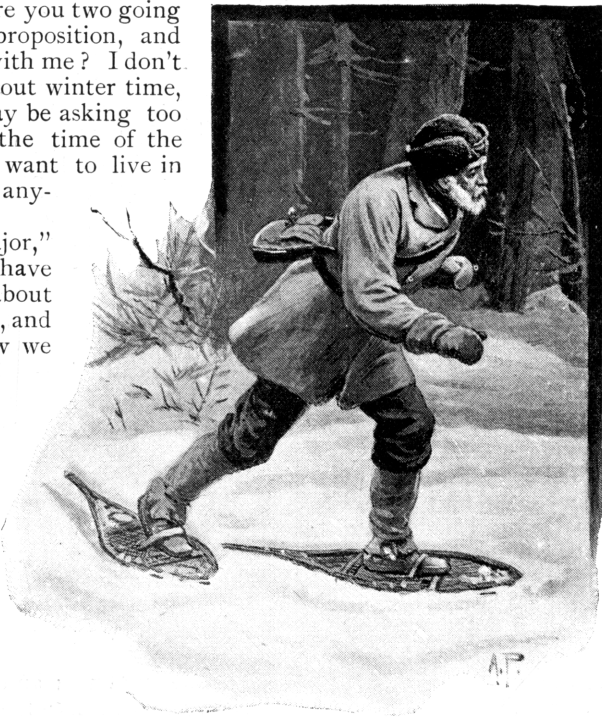
Early in the afternoon the Major drove us over to the Dollivers behind a pair of magnificent Cleveland bays. The grand action and spirit of the powerful animals, fired by the delight of being out of doors on this sparkling winter day, would have made Claratremble, she said, under ordinary circumstances; but with the Major holding the reins she felt as safe as if she were dashing through the white caps with an old Cape Cod skipper at the tiller.

That was a grand old Christmas night at the Dolliver house. Our hostess, who was soon informed of what had happened in the morning, urged that our engagement should be made known, and when the punch-bowl was christened, and

the first cupful of the Major's wonderful brew was presented by him to Clara, there was an outburst of congratulation which deeply stirred the hearts of three of us.

"And now," said Major Pendallas, "let us drink the health of the blessed storm of Christmas eve, eighteen hundred and eighty."

And we drank it.



"A LETTER HAD BEEN BROUGHT BY A MAN IN SNOW-SHOES."

Portraits of Celebrities at different times of their Lives.



AGE 16.
From a Photo.



From a AGE 18. *[Photograph.]*



From a Photo. by AGE 22. *[Barr and.]*



From a Photo. by AGE 25. *[Vanderweyde.]*



From a Photo. by PRESENT DAY. *[Vanderweyde.]*

MISS MARY ANDERSON.
(MADAME ANTONIO NAVARRO).

MISS MARY ANDERSON was born at Sacramento, and made her first appearance on the stage as *Juliet* in her seventeenth year—the age at which our first portrait represents her. From that day down

to the early part of 1890 her career was one long course of unchecked prosperity and popularity, only broken by her withdrawal from the stage on her marriage with M. Antonio Navarro de Viana, a citizen of New York. Madame Navarro and her husband have taken up their residence at Tunbridge Wells.



AGE 5.
From a Pencil Drawing.



AGE 16.
From a Photo. by T. Roger.



AGE 23.
From Photo. by Hills & Saunders.



From a [] AGE 34. [Photograph.

ANDREW LANG.

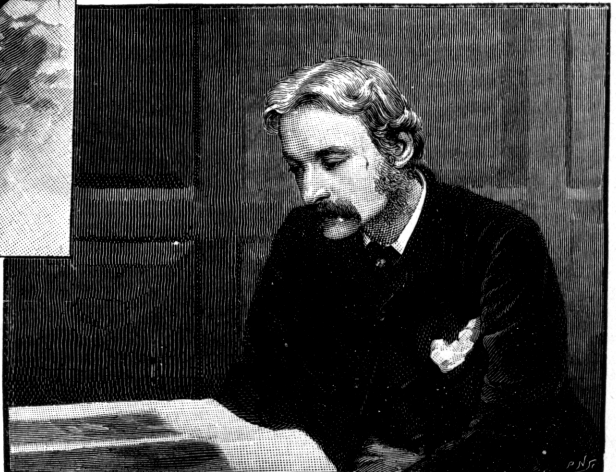
BORN 1844.



R. ANDREW LANG was born at Selkirk, March 31, 1844, and was educated at Edinburgh, St. An-

draws, and Oxford, where he took high honours. Mr. Lang is well known as one of

the most versatile and charming writers of the day. It apparently makes little difference to him whether he is producing a ballad, a set of society verses, a leading article in *The Daily News*, a translation of a classic, a history of religions, or a biography; everything he does is marked by the same peculiar charm of style and treatment which has made his name familiar to a host of readers.



From a Photo. by []

AGE 47.

[Fred. Hollyer.



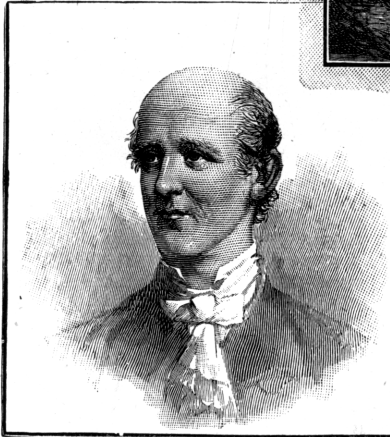
From a] AGE 2. [Miniature.



AGE 10. R. & V. LOR & CO
From a Water-Colour
by Mrs. Hawkins.



From a] AGE 19. [Painting.



From a] AGE 50. [Drawing.

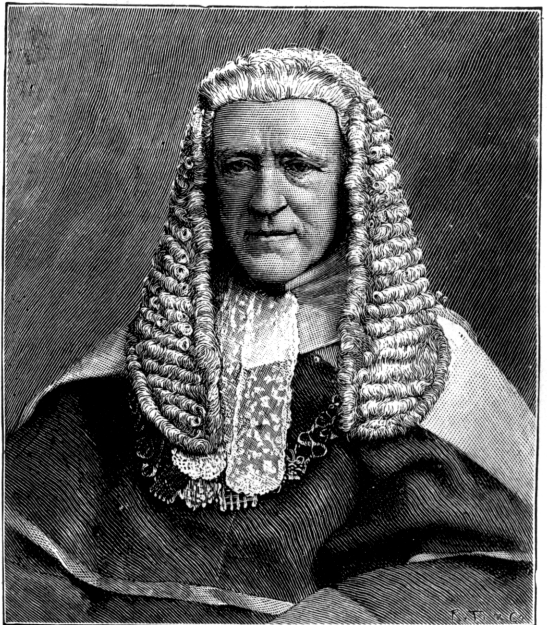
LORD COLERIDGE.

BORN 1821.



HE RIGHT HON. JOHN DUKE COLERIDGE, Lord Chief Justice of England, was born at Heath's Court, Ottery St. Mary, and educated at Eton (at which time our second portrait represents him), and at Balliol College, Oxford, where he was an undergraduate at nineteen, the age of our third portrait. He was called to the Bar in 1846, and after a brilliant career was, at fifty, the age of our fourth portrait, made Attorney-General. Two years later he was raised to the peerage by the title

of Baron Coleridge, of Ottery St. Mary. In 1880 he was made Lord Chief Justice of Eng-



From a Photo. by]

AGE 70.

[Whitlock, Birmingham.

land, and is, as need hardly here be added, one of the most brilliant ornaments of the British bench, which consists, now as ever, of some of the finest intellects and characters of their generation.



From a] AGE 13. [Painting.



From a Drawing: AGE 17. [by Von Kessel.



From a] AGE 23. [Drawing.



From a] AGE 30 [Drawing.



AGE 40.
From an Oil Painting by J. Becker.



From a Painting by] AGE 51. [Von Leutach.

PRINCE BISMARCK.

BORN 1815.



PRINCE BISMARCK was at 13 a pupil in the Frederick William Gymnasium at Berlin; at 17, a student at the University of Göttingen; at 23 and 30, a country gentleman



From a Photo. by] PRESENT DAY. [Loescher & Petsch, Berlin.

on his father's Pomeranian estates; at 40, ambassador at Paris; at 51, the conqueror at Sadowa. What Prince Bismarck is at the present day is known to all the world.



From a Photo. by] AGE 29. [Duval & Co., Manchester.



From a Photo.] AGE 33. [by Petschler.



From a Photo. by] AGE 40. [London Stereo. Co.



From a Photo. by] AGE 60. [G. R. Lavis, Eastbourne.

JOSEPH PARKER, D.D.

BORN 1830.



R. PARKER, who was born at Hexham-on-Tyne, was educated at University College, London. At the age in which he is represented in our first portrait he had just left

his pastorate at Bunbury to take up the work at Manchester, with which he was conspicuously occupied for over ten years. At forty, the age depicted in our third portrait, Dr. Parker had recently come to London, where he built the City Temple at the cost of £70,000, and where his fervid eloquence attracts huge congregations.



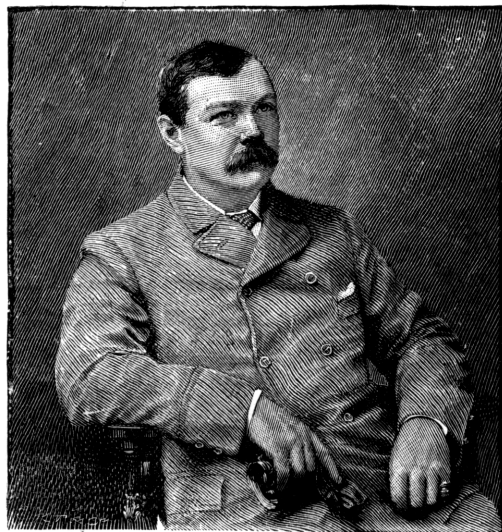
From a [Photo.] AGE 4. [Photo.]



AGE 14.
From a Photo. by Campbells, Edinburgh.



From a Photo. by] AGE 22. [Bashford, Portobello.



From a Photo. by] AGE 32. [Elliott & Fry.

A. CONAN DOYLE.

BORN 1859.



R. A. CONAN DOYLE was born in Edinburgh. His grandfather was John Doyle the caricaturist, better known as "H. B.," and his uncles, Richard Doyle

of *Punch*, James Doyle the historian, and Henry Doyle, C.B., director of the Irish Academy. He was brought up to medicine, and after two long voyages, one to the Arctic seas in a Greenland whaler, and the other to the West Coast of Africa, he settled into practice at Southsea. Ever since 1878 he had been a contributor to various magazines. Finally, he brought out "Micah Clarke," which, after being refused by five publishers, was eventually taken by Longmans, and is now going into its sixth edition. Finding literary work more and more engrossing, he gave up the medical profession and devoted his whole energies to authorship. There are few better writers of short stories than Mr. Conan Doyle, and it gives us great pleasure to announce that the extraordinary adventures of Sherlock Holmes, which have proved so popular with our readers during the past six months, will be continued in the new year. Mr. Conan Doyle is very keen on every form of sport—football, cycling, and especially cricket.



From a] AGE 8. [Photograph.



From a Photo. by] AGE 22. [Hansen & Weller.



From a Photo. by] AGE 29. [Hansen & Weller.



From a Photo.] PRESENT DAY. [by Vandyk.

MADAME CATHINCA AMYOT.



ADAME AMYOT, the clever painter of "Tit-Bits," the picture which proved so popular when presented with the first number of this magazine, and also of the equally clever companion picture, entitled "Scattered Tit-Bits," which is given with the present number, was born at Copenhagen. She began to draw at a very early age, but she was twenty before her father allowed her to study art

as a profession. At Dusseldorf, and afterwards at Christiania and Stockholm, she studied assiduously, and painted some important pictures. In 1877 and 1878 she had pictures on the line at the Paris Salon. In the latter year she married Mr. Thomas Amyot, an English doctor, and soon afterwards settled in London, where her pictures appear in all the chief exhibitions. It may be of interest to add that the boy in the two "Tit-Bits" pictures is a portrait of her own little son.

Otto's Folly.

FROM THE GERMAN OF P. K. ROSEGGGER.



HEY called her Anna of the Forest Castle all along both sides of the river. Nobody would call her the forester's Annchen; they thought she deserved a grander name, for Annchen was very beautiful. She was but little more than fifteen years old. Hitherto her great dreamy, child-like eyes had looked openly and fearlessly out into the world and at all mankind, but just about that time the long lashes would droop and fall, and the girl became very quiet and reserved. It was only the hungry beggar who was favoured with a kindly glance from the bright star-like eyes, as she put a piece of bread into his hand. She would give no look of greeting, hardly even a civil word,

to any of the men of high standing, or the gay, handsome young fellows who, coming from afar, stopped in passing at the door of the forester's lowly hut; and if she did sometimes vouchsafe a word or two to any of the youths, it was sure to be something sharp and cutting as a knife, and many a brave young fellow felt deeply wounded thereby.

On the other side of the river lived a youth who did not think that title grand enough. Anna was the only maiden in all the country round about who would not look at him, and yet he was the handsomest young fellow in the whole neighbourhood. He was past eighteen, the only son of the manager of the well-known ironworks over on the other side, and his name was Otto.

He was away studying at the Gymnasium, but when he was at home for the vacation he was always out and about with horses and dogs, lording it over the other young fellows and teasing the girls.

It was the lovely time of spring, and the feast of Whitsuntide was at hand. Anna's parents were about to celebrate their silver wedding. The little church was to be specially decorated in their honour, and there were to be great doings all round about; many in the village had ordered new clothes for the occasion, and new shoes for dancing. Being the merry month of May wreaths and nosegays would be provided in plenty.

At the manager's house, on the other side of the river, all was bustle and life. He it was who was getting up the little fête for the forester and his wife, and the rooms



"A KINDLY GLANCE."

in his house were being prepared for the banquet.

Otto was busy in the stables and coach-house, and as he made ready his fireworks he kept saying to himself: "To-morrow I will force her to dance with me!"

Late in the afternoon Anna came up to the big house, round by the upper bridge; she had many things to talk over for the morrow with her friend, Adelheid, Otto's sister.

"Your dear mother is to have a lovely bridal wreath," said Adelheid, "but you must not tell her that it is already the second one I have made. Otto spoilt the first one altogether. I had taken such a lot of trouble over it, and put in rosemary and evergreens, and my three first peonies which flower so late this year, when up comes this mad boy, seizes the wreath out of my hands and runs dancing away with it on his own head. I think I cried for almost an hour just with rage and despair. Otto is sometimes so dreadfully high-spirited and wild he turns the house topsy-turvy. You don't know how wild he is, Anna; I must tell it you, even though he were ten times my brother. You should just see him when he fires up! But when the storm is over then he is ashamed of himself, and is very anxious to make peace."

How true was this description Anna was soon to learn.

When she was leaving, Otto wanted to row her across the river. His mother declared he was not capable of doing it. At last, however, she had to give in, and the headstrong lad, flinging away his riding whip, rolled up his sleeves, and running down to the river bank, launched the boat out on to the swelling waves and loosened the anchor.

When Anna came up, carrying her little basket, he took off his straw hat, and led her carefully along the plank and into the dancing boat.

"For Heaven's sake, children, take care of yourselves, and you, Otto, see you steer properly! Stay! I had better send the boatman with you!"

But Otto had already pushed off.

"Just as though I were still a boy!" he muttered.

With practised hand he dipped the paddle into the bright green waves, and the little boat glided on its way across the river.

Anna sat on the little bench and waved her handkerchief until Adelheid and her mother disappeared through the garden

gate. Then she fixed her gaze on the water.

Suddenly, when they had nearly reached the middle of the river, Otto let go the paddle.

"I have something to say to you, Anna," he said.

She raised her head. The boat seemed to stand still, but the willows on the bank glided slowly onwards.

"Anna," said Otto, in a clear voice, "you *must* love me!" And his eyes seemed on fire.

The girl was silent.

"Anna, you *shall* love me!" he repeated.

"Why not?" answered the girl. "You have done me no harm. But I should hardly have thought you would have ventured to use *must* and *shall* to the 'noble maiden of the forest,' as you call me."

"Anna, do not laugh at me; I will not stand it; I am a man!"

"I shall believe that when you have grown a head taller."

The lad stood up in the boat, displaying his tall slender figure.

"You are always teasing me," he rejoined; "but I will show you that I have a good head on my shoulders, and that at any rate I have every bit as much sense and wit as any of those who stare at you and run after you—and perhaps a good deal more. Look me in the face, Anna!"

"Oh, I know what you look like."

"Look at me, Anna!" He stayed the paddle against the boat; his eyes gleamed.

"What will happen, if I don't? Perhaps you will tear my mother's bridal wreath in pieces, as you did the one your sister made this morning?" And she hid the basket behind her back.

"They shall keep their wedding-day without us!" he exclaimed, as he loosened the paddle from its fastening. "If you will neither look at me nor love me, Anna," he went on, trembling, "I will fling this paddle into the water!"

"Then fling it into the water," retorted Anna, coldly.

He turned, and without another word let the paddle drop over the side. It fell with a splash into the river, and floated away. Otto leaned back in the corner of the boat with folded arms.

Anna had jumped up, and tried to seize the paddle. She stood there pale and motionless.

The little boat glided quietly as the

waves carried it. Anna was speechless with horror. Otto leaned back with closed eyes, apparently thoroughly satisfied with himself, letting his hand hang over the boat's side and dip into the water.

The broad valley lay calm and peaceful before them. Green fields and meadows were on either side, and the high tree-tops were still illuminated by the rays of the setting sun.

Anna buried her face in her hands, and wept bitterly. Otto half rose up.

"Now," he said, "we are alone in the world—you and I!" And his voice was soft and gentle.

The girl roused herself. "You *must* take me across the water, Otto," she cried. "You undertook to do it, and a *man* never breaks his word!"

"I will take you across the river," he replied, relenting.

"But you must land me just opposite your house."

"Hush! Anna; you must see that now that would be quite impossible; our house is far behind us. Very soon we shall reach the fishing huts—we will stop there. Then I will get a carriage and horses at one of the farms, and in an hour's time you will be at home. Now, stop crying; surely you can understand a joke. I see I cannot force you to love me."

The little boat still drifted. It kept always in the middle of the river; the waves plashed and broke on either sandy bank. Often a little fish popped up and snapped after a fly, and the water bubbled over the place where it had been. The sun had gone down, banks of golden clouds floated in the skies, and the boat went dancing over purple-coloured waves.

At last, when it was dark, and the valley began to narrow, and the boat drew near the fisher-huts, Otto began to shout for help. His voice re-echoed back from the forest with a dull, empty sound. No one

heard; no one came to help them. Then he tried to break off one of the benches and to make a paddle of it, but everything was firmly riveted together; and the little boat still drifted.

The young man clasped his hands in agony.

"I would give my life," he exclaimed, "to change our course, but I cannot do it! Anna, night is drawing near. If we float on like this a few hours longer," and he seized her arm, with a shudder, "we shall get into the Dragon's Hole!"

"Into the Dragon's Hole!" screamed Anna. She turned shudderingly away from Otto, and then clung to him as though she were already sinking in some bottomless abyss.

The "Dragon's Hole" was the name given to the mouth of the wild cavern through which the mountain river rushed, and flowing onwards underground for many miles, came to light again at last behind the mountain where the plain began. There the river is much narrower than where it



"SHE CLUNG TO HIM."

forces its way through the cavern, and often it carries with it mud, stones, fossils, and bones of animals forth into the plains beyond. The saying goes that, in the days gone by, a race of dragons lived in those unexplored grottos, and that is why the entrance to them is still called the "Dragon's Hole." That strange animals must have lived in these caves is proved by the curious bones and skeletons washed out by the river. For some time past many men of science had intended to explore these subterranean regions; but the undertaking was by no means an inviting one—indeed, perhaps hardly feasible. The inaccessible cliffs, the unfathomable depths, were terrible merely from the thundering roar that proceeded from the cavern's mouth.

And it was towards this awful spot that the helpless little boat was drawing! As yet it still floated gently on the ripples, wafted by the mild breezes of the lovely night of May, while the stars, in all their beauty, were still shining overhead.

"The paddle must be floating after us," said Otto; "it will surely strike against the boat!"

The boat was driven slightly over to the right bank, and Otto strove to use his hands as paddles. Then he held his coat spread out to form a sail—but all in vain. The boat drifted back into the middle of the stream.

"We are foolish to exert ourselves like this," said Otto, wiping away the perspiration from his face; "of course my father will have gone on ahead of us with carriage and horses, and they will drag us ashore long before we reach the Dragon's Hole."

"How can he know that the paddle has been thrown into the water?" thought Anna; "and even if he has seen it there is no driving road through this wild country. The river alone keeps on its course; no one can come to our rescue!" But she did not give utterance to these thoughts, not wishing to increase Otto's distress.

"To-morrow we shall have a good laugh at the whole affair," said Otto suddenly; "we shall be twice as merry after a joke like this. There is to be music in the afternoon, fireworks in the evening and something else besides—but what it is I am not going to tell."

"Hush! Otto," rejoined the girl, sadly.

Again they were silent. Nothing was heard save the plashing and gurgling of the water. On both sides of the river wood-covered hills now rose high.

"One can hardly believe it possible that the river flows so quickly," muttered Otto to himself; "here is the ravine already!"

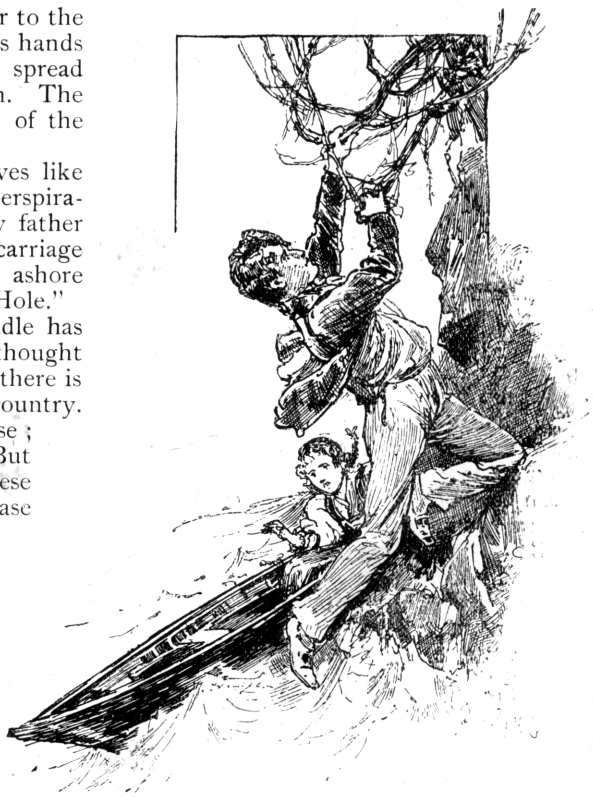
Standing up, he began to shout aloud—louder still. The sound re-echoed through the trees and against the rocks—then nothing was heard save the rushing waters as the boat glided on. Anna clung trembling to Otto's arm.

"If I take hold of you," he said, "and we throw ourselves into the water together, perhaps we can manage to reach the shore."

"You see how rough the water is, and the bank is steep. We must not foolishly court death, Otto; it would not be right. I will lie down now and close my eyes, and leave our fate to Heaven."

"Ah, it is easy for you, Anna," replied Otto, deeply moved. "But I—I shall die guilty of your death!"

The roaring of the waters grew louder and louder, and the waves dashed noisily



"OTTO SEIZED HOLD OF THE TWISTED ROOTS OF A BUSH."

against the cliffs on either side. At that moment the little boat rose high upon a wave ; then, diving downwards, was dashed against a rock.

Otto pushed forward, and, climbing up, seized hold of the twisted roots of a bush, and swung himself on to the stones with a great cry of joy. But, Anna ! he must save her. Again he jumped back into the boat to seize her and bring her ashore, when at the same moment the boat was driven from the rock, and darted again into the roaring waters.

The poor boy sank at her feet. "All is over !" he cried. "There is no help for us now, Anna !"

He took the little basket from behind her, and carefully lifting out the bridal wreath placed it on her brow. With an unspeakably loving and tender smile, she whispered : "Otto !"

The boat flew onwards, tossed and pitched upon the foaming waves. The water was seething and roaring as though alive ; high above them the cliffs nearly met, shutting out the stars of heaven.

Suddenly the boat was shot into black darkness. The roaring noise was fearful. The frail skiff plunged and tossed ; the waves dashed over the two terrified young creatures who, clinging together, cowered down at the bottom of the boat.

They had arrived at the "Dragon's Hole !"

Over the terrific roaring of the water they could hear how the boat groaned and creaked ; often it was dashed against the rocks and whirled round in an eddying pool. But its planks held firm. Quicker and quicker it darted forward into the grotto—forward to unknown and unimagined horrors.

Anna seemed to swoon, but Otto could feel that her lips moved gently. The cave was here so low that the bow of the boat struck more than once against the low-hanging rocks. The roaring of the waters grew louder and louder, and heavy drops fell on them from above. Then the cavern seemed to widen. In the distance was heard a dull booming roar, which came nearer and nearer, until in an incredibly short time it sounded like the noise of a most terrific storm. A thick wet mist, the spray of the breaking waves enveloped them, and the sound was in their ears like rolling thunder. Faster and faster flew the boat. Otto, raising himself, cried out, "Anna, once again I beg you to forgive me !"

She could not hear his words. The deafening noise half stunned her. The boat darted like an arrow through the deep water. Then came a fearful shock, and it stuck fast between the rocks.

Otto jumped up, and, seizing hold of Anna, lifted her out upon the stony ground. The boat was jammed between the rocks, her bow well out of the water, and the spray dashing over her.

But the two young people were on solid ground again. They clambered up over the rocks in pitchy darkness, till they felt themselves on a smooth, level spot. There they sank down, side by side.

"Perhaps we may find a way out of this, Anna !" shouted Otto, in fresh hope.

Suddenly the girl gave a piercing scream, and seized hold of her companion convulsively. An icy cold reptile had crawled over her foot. She shuddered as she shook it off.

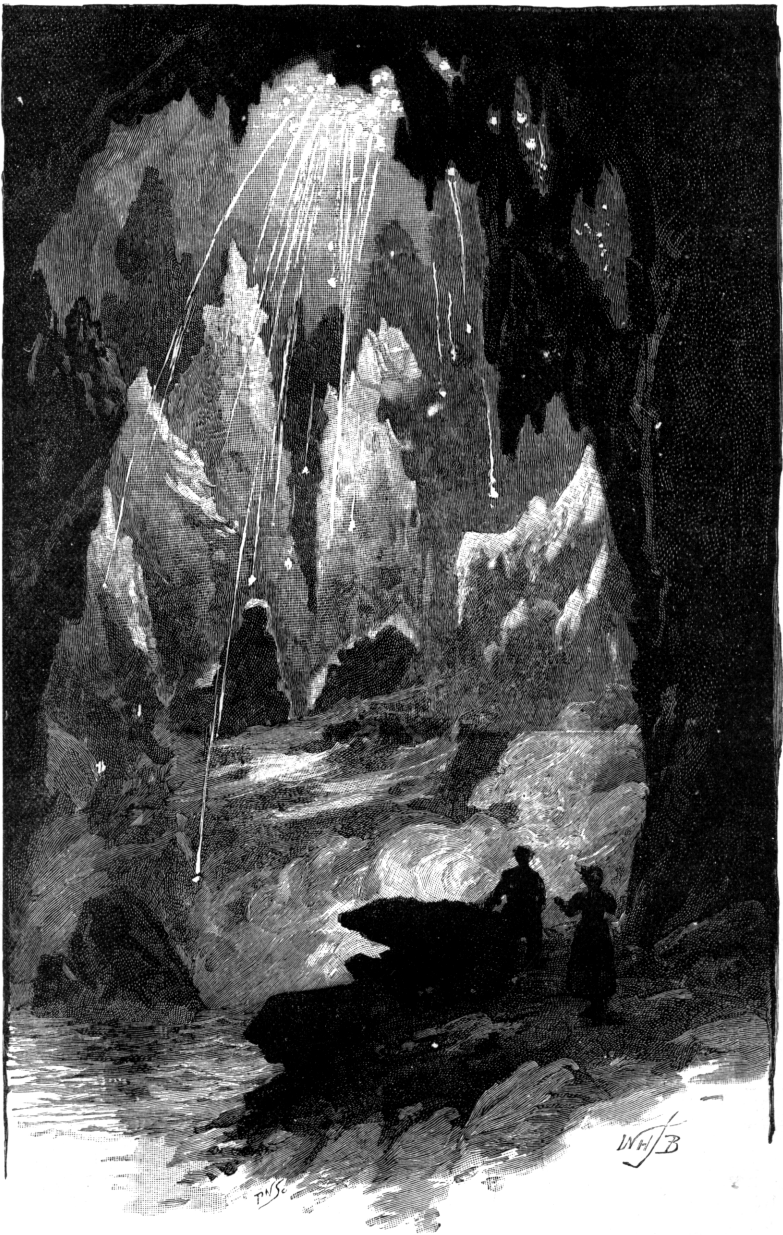
Then they tried to dry their clothes. As Otto turned his coat over, a light, thin stick covered with paper fell into his hands. It was one of the fireworks which he had prepared for the fête, and he must have put it into his pocket without thinking. A thought struck him. He hastily searched through all his pockets, and found a most welcome object in the shape of a tinder-box, which he was in the habit of carrying with him when he went out shooting.

"Now, Anna," he shouted in the girl's ear, "we shall have light !"

He began striking the rock with a bit of flint. At first no sparks came ; it was as though the very flint was deprived of all powers of light in this damp, dark grotto. However, he worked on untiringly ; he tried it at various places, and behold at last there came a starry spark. An exclamation of delight, continued efforts, and the sparks came more frequently, and at last the tinder was alight.

Otto placed his firework on a stone, with a little piece of the burning tinder close against it. Then he stood on one side, placing Anna at a safe distance behind him.

Round about them all was still dark as night. Then suddenly there came a flash of light darting upwards in dazzling brightness, high up along the grey and beetling crags ; everything was aglow ; wondrous shapes of many colours stood round about the vast grotto ; and down in the abyss below foamed and hissed the fiery vapours of the terrible torrent, while Anna stood there pale as any of the dripping fossil



HIGH UP AMONG THE JAGGED PEAKS THE FIRE-BALL BURST ASUNDER."

figures, her lovely tresses hanging loose and dishevelled on her shoulders, a few leaves and flowers from the bridal wreath still clinging to her damp hair. High up among the jagged peaks the fire-ball burst asunder into thousands of gleaming sheaves and stars, pouring down a rain of fire into the depths below. Some sparks clung to the walls and shone brightly for a

few brief moments; others fell and went out behind the demon-like shapes which stood grinning threateningly like so many visitors from the Inferno.

Then again all was darkness, thicker and blacker than before. A suffocating smoke and smell alone remained.

"This is heaven and hell together," said Otto. He could not hear a single word he

said, and yet all was perfectly quiet. The roaring of the water in his ears had ceased.

They groped about for a dry spot, and sat down together on a stone. Otto clasped the poor girl in his arms, and on his hands he felt her warm tears fall.

Thus they sat a long time. Anna had fallen into a kind of swoon, her head resting against Otto's shoulder, her wet locks streaming over his hands. He laid his burning cheeks against her head.

"Oh, forgive me, my own darling!" he murmured. "If you were to pass away like this I would throw myself into the torrent with your body in my arms."

Presently, bringing out his tinder-box, he struck a light, and slowly and cautiously began to climb down the rocks. He wished to find out what had become of the river, since all was now so still. As he stood there in the mud, he felt as though his feet rested upon crawling reptiles, and a cold shudder ran through him. At last he reached the spot where the boat was still stuck fast between the rocks, and, kindling his light afresh, gazed into the deep and shining waters.

Suddenly he saw upon the waves a glittering line—a kind of slab with little stars upon it, and steeped in a bluish light, almost like an imitation of the starry heavens. This slab floated backwards and forwards, now approaching, now receding. Behind it seemed to be a long, thin object, like a snake. Nothing more could he distinguish.

A sudden hopeful thought flashed across the young man's mind. He stepped out into the water up to his thighs, and stretched out his hand to reach the shining object. What he grasped was a block of wood, having a rope attached to it.

With both hands he pulled the heavy block of wood into the boat, and passed the end of the rope through the boat's iron ring to keep it firm. All this he did in a tumult of delight not to be described in words. Then he rushed, clambering and stumbling over the rocks, to Anna, shook her and roused her, crying with all the strength of

his hoarse voice that she was to come with him directly; that they were saved at last.

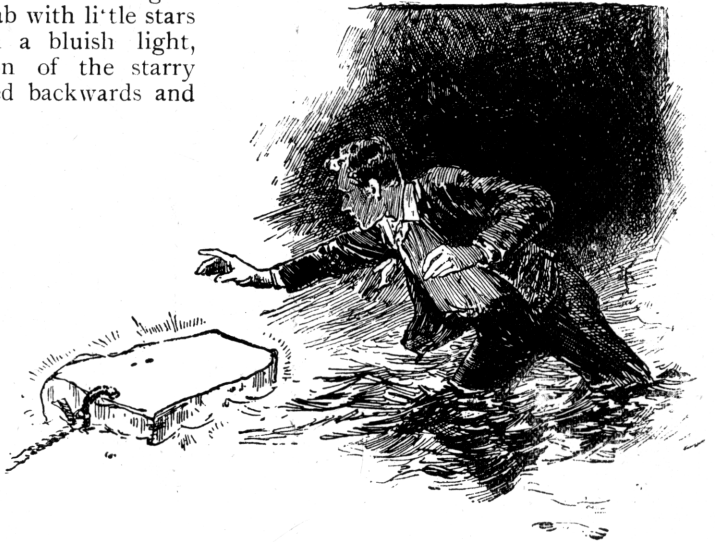
When they got down to the boat again it had already begun to move from the rock. By the fading light of the still burning tinder, and only just in the nick of time, they sprang into the boat, half-filled with water as it was, which, fastened firmly to the block of wood and highly stretched rope, slowly and heavily moved away.

For a while they were passing through smooth water under the overhanging rocks; then they reached the dreadful place beneath the cliffs where the waves were running high.

Then the two rescued from such peril covered their eyes with their hands. At last they were standing on dry ground, bathed in the bright, warm rays of the shining, sunny day!

On both banks of the river, close beside the Dragon's Hole, a great crowd of people had assembled. Many had climbed up on the rocks, to be the first to see the boat when it appeared. And now all was explained.

The evening before some fishermen had



"HE STRETCHED OUT HIS HAND TO REACH THE SHINING OBJECT."

seen the paddle floating, and as soon as the young people were missed it was easily guessed what had happened to them. The whole night long hundreds of people were up and down along the banks of the river, searching for the missing ones, till finally it was clear to all that they must have drifted into the Dragon's Hole.

Then means of saving them were thought of. For hours the crowd waited, while the endless rope was uncoiled, and, together with the piece of wood, which had been made to shine with phosphorescent light, was floated into the Dragon's Hole. Then four strong men began hauling in the rope. No one dared to hope—hope seemed impossible. But when the block appeared again, out floated from the cavern's jaws the little boat!

And when the great crowd saw it, such a shout of joy went up as drowned the roaring of the torrent. The poor parents wept for joy, as they clasped their recovered children in their arms.

But they two were deathly pale, quite deaf, and almost blind. Slowly and only

by degrees did they recover from the shock, and were able to look upon the happy faces around them, and hear the roaring waters and the shouts of joy.

Arm-in-arm they got into the softly-cushioned carriage; for they quite refused to be parted.

"What a bridal gift for our silver wedding!" exclaimed the forester. And his wife added: "Truly my prayers last night were not in vain!"

Thus they returned home through the forests to their own valley, the crowd following in procession, and dragging the little boat with them, like a trophy of victory—to be kept for Otto and Anna in everlasting remembrance of that terrible Whitsun eve.

Christmas Crackers.



IF there is one thing inseparable from Christmas in general and the little ones' seasonable gatherings in particular, it is—a cracker. With what a delightful look of expectation they have waited for it to go “bang,” and how they have screamed as they scrambled after the surprise which came in response to the explosion, and revelled in a complete outfit in the way of paper garments, hats and caps, jewels, toys, puzzles, and what not. But there are others who love the cracker. Have you not seen them? She is merry eighteen, and he with just enough moustache to twirl.

They each seize an end of that convenient little cracker—“bang” it goes. Why doesn't he pick up the gaily decorated paper cap, or she the piquant little apron with the blue bows? Simply because there is a tiny slip of paper inside, and they are eager to read it. That little scrap of paper may say:

“The sweet crimson rose
with its beautiful hue
Is not half so deep as my
passion for you.

‘Twill wither and fade,
and no more will be
seen

But whilst my heart lives
you will still be its
queen!”

and the next mo-

ment they are in the quietest corner of the room. It was Cupid himself who hopped out of that cracker. Christmas crackers have much to answer for.

Considering the many moments of merriment which these small rolls of paper will surely bring, and the countless chats



“BANG.”

on courting topics they are sure to give rise to, we are inclined to hasten from romance to reality, and take a peep in upon the workers whose busy fingers provide the crackers—in short, to find out exactly how they are made, from the moment the paper arrives at the factory to the time the completed article is ready to be packed up in dozens and sent away. Messrs. Tom Smith & Co., of Wilson-street, Finsbury, are really the creators of the Christmas cracker as we now know it. About forty years ago a sweetmeat and love-motto was wrapped in a piece of fancy paper, and in those days answered the same purpose as Christmas crackers do now. They were called "Kiss Mottoes." Then it got converted into "Somebody's Luggage," and finally the elaborately got up Christmas Cracker of to-day. Oscar Wilde did much, however, for its welfare. Even the crackers caught the æsthetic movement and became wrapped up in æsthetic colours. Messrs. Tom Smith & Co. manufacture eleven millions in a single season. Our own country will claim some eight or nine millions of these, and the remainder will get scattered over the world, India claiming a big parcel.

The first room visited at their immense factory was on the ground floor. Here is a miniature quarry. Hundreds of stones imported from Germany are stacked everywhere. Men are busy in the far corner grinding and grinding them until a perfectly pure and level surface is obtained. If you feel inclined you might endeavour to raise from the floor the largest litho stone used. It measures sixty inches by forty, and would turn the scale at a ton. The stones are then passed on to the litho artists, for lithography plays a most important part in the manufacture of a Christmas Cracker. Upstairs is the artists' room. Clever artists are constantly engaged in making fresh designs year in and year out, and it is nothing extraordinary for some of them to spend weeks in completing a single set of designs. The literary work, too, is no small

item, and a man who can write good verse can earn good money. Ladies seem to be the most adept at this sort of thing, which is paid for at so much a set of verses. Mr. Walter Smith, who accompanied us on our tour, goes to a desk and takes out a handful of sheets on which all sorts and conditions of bards have written. Some of them are very funny. Here is one, which is immediately waste-paper basketed :—

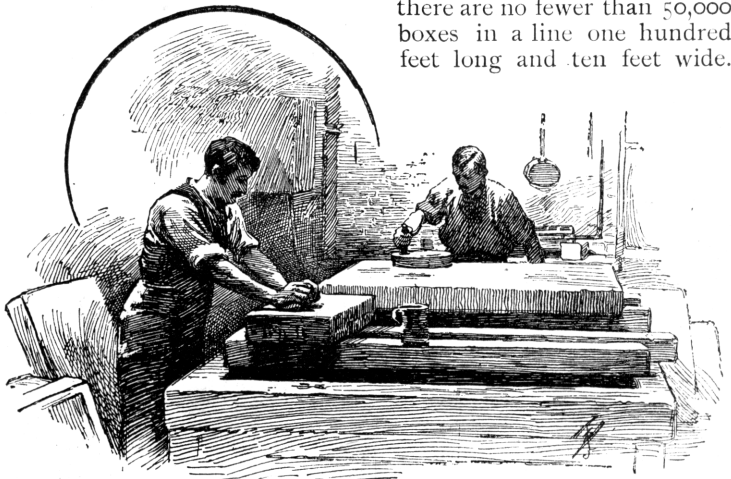
"Whilst sweets are eaten, and crackers cracked,
Naughty boys are sure to be whacked."

The poet asked five shillings for this, and offered to supply them in unlimited quantities at the same price.

The next one is a gem, and is at once accepted :—

"Half hidden 'neath the spreading leaves,
A purple violet bent its head ;
Yet all around the moss-grown path
In love its fragrance softly shed.
My living violet, whisper low,
That o'er my life your fragrance sweet
Will make a garden of my life,
Where love its counterpart may meet !"

We now pass through innumerable avenues of Christmas crackers, all in huge parcels. In one stack alone there are no fewer than 50,000 boxes in a line one hundred feet long and ten feet wide.



"GRINDING LITHOGRAPHIC STONES."

This represents a month's work, and every one is sold. We can quite realise this when we are told that one retail firm alone in London will send in such an order for crackers that it would take sixteen of the largest delivery vans built to convey them, with 1,200 boxes packed away in each van. It is no unusual thing for an order of £500, £1,000, or £1,500 worth of Christmas crackers to be received, the biggest of all totalling up to £3,000, the highest in the trade. This

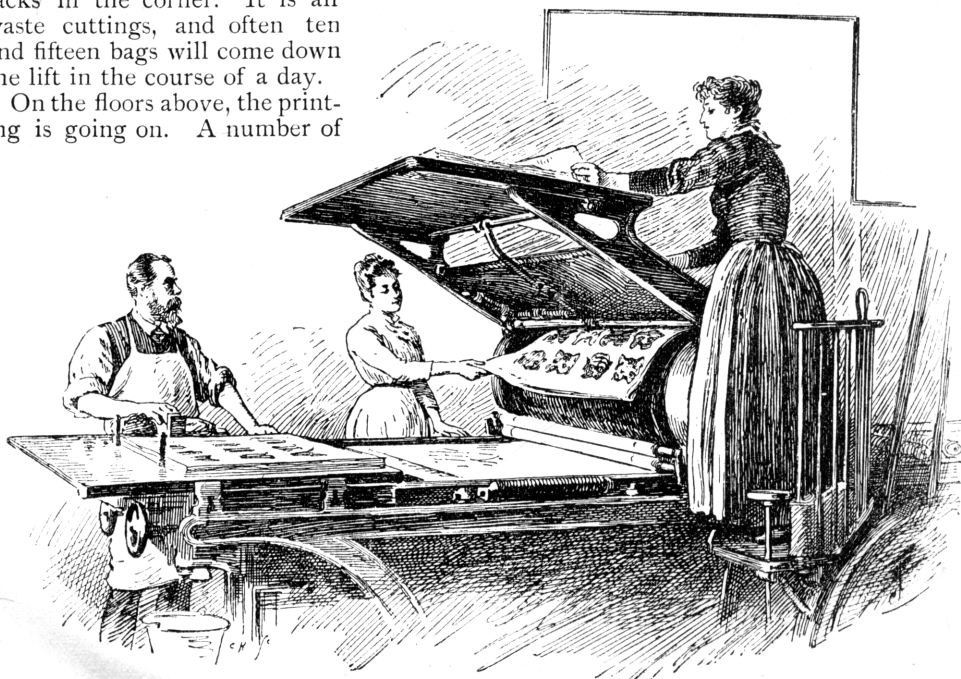
reminds us of the number of cardboard boxes which must be needed. The box-making is a distinct industry. A plant of machinery for their manufacture costs anything between £2,000 and £5,000, and during

litho machines are running, for the most part presided over by men assisted by girls, who certainly take off the sheets with marvellous rapidity. One machine is printing funny faces to go outside the crackers, another is turning out sheets with hundreds of flowers on it, and yet another is giving us countless little Cupids. Every rose and Cupid is cut out, and it is the same with any other picture with which it is intended to decorate a cracker.

We shall be safe in saying that the contents of crackers come from every part of the world, and a peep into the store-room where they are kept in huge bins and great boxes, will substantiate this. On one corner of the counter are thousands of tiny pill boxes. These are filled with rouge and powder,

a busy week 30,000 would be made and used in that time. The card is all cut to shape and stacked away, and the patterns are many, for there are over 150 varieties of boxes. Just look at this pile of sacks in the corner. It is all waste cuttings, and often ten and fifteen bags will come down the lift in the course of a day.

On the floors above, the printing is going on. A number of



PRINTING MASKS

THE PARCEL DEPARTMENT.

with a little puff thrown in. Such are the contents of one of the "Crackers for Spinsters," those estimable single ladies also being allotted faded flowers, a night-cap, a wedding ring, and a bottle of hair dye. This pile of bracelets came from Bohemia, fans from Japan, toys from Christiania, with little wooden cups and saucers from the same place, scarf-pins from Saxony; the little miniature pipes, as played on by the accompanist to a Punch and Judy show, are made by Parisians; Jews' harps come from Germany, and tiny wooden barrels from America. The familiar flexible faces which can be squeezed and pulled into every conceivable shape are made in London. Hundreds of little glass bottles are here, supposed to be filled with a certain intoxicant known as gin. A young girl is filling

Turkey, India, China, and South Africa all contribute to the store. The sight would set a child pining with pardonable envy to play about this part of the factory.

To enumerate every item which



"FROM ALL QUARTERS OF THE GLOBE."

finds its way inside the crackers would call for a catalogue the size of *THE STRAND MAGAZINE*.

We are now on our way to the top of the building where the Christmas cracker is really made. First, there is the giving-out counter. Here come the girls and receive into their hands a certain quantity of what is wanted to make the particular part on which they are engaged. Every strip of paper is counted. Close by the giving-out counter a number of young women are fringing the edges of the paper to be rolled. This is done on a small machine capable of taking four thicknesses of ordinary paper and six of the brighter-looking gelatine. The material to be fringed is put against the teeth of the apparatus, the girl stamps it, and it is ready to give a neat and gay appearance to either end of the body of the cracker.

The main workroom presents a busy sight. It is nearing one o'clock, when the dinner bell will ring, and the hands are

them with the very reverse of anything intoxicating, although the label on the bottle says "A 1,000,000 overproof." Italy,



FRINGING.

working at high speed so as to finish their self-allotted task ere the bell tolls. Four hundred feet of benches are ranged from end to end of the room, and here are scores of girls sitting in front of partitioned-off spaces ranged along the lengthy counters. Every girl has her glue-pot by her side. Turn round and look at the immense stove where twenty pots are being constantly warmed up, so that as soon as a worker's glue cools down she has only to cross to the stove and there is another pot ready at hand for her. It is noticeable how cheerful the young women are and to what a superior class they apparently belong. A good cracker hand can easily earn 14s., 16s., and at a busy time 18s. a week, and the cracker trade of this firm alone means the constant employment, directly and indirectly, of close upon 1,000 people.

One young woman is rolling the paper — paper of all the colours of the rainbow are before her, and dozens of completed crackers are arranged in front waiting to be carried away, and the manufacture of them booked to her credit. The paper is rolled on a brass tube, so that a trim appearance is obtained. Coloured string ties it up, and the gelatine is quickly placed round it. The girl

we were watching said she could roll two dozen "best work" in a quarter of an hour, though she could do commoner work much quicker. Her next door companion was blessed with busy fingers. First she took a slip of paper—this was the inner lining; round this she wrapped the gelatine, added two decorating ends or fringes, and then put in the detonator, the explosive paper tape, and it was ready to receive its contents. She could do a gross an hour. Her fingers travelled faster than the pencil in our note-book. Passing girl after girl, we find them all surrounded by the brightest of colours in gelatine and paper. One is making paper dresses for a doll, a neat little white tissue frock trimmed with red braid. This formed part of rather a novel box of crackers. A good-looking doll is placed in the box, and each cracker has some article of attire inside, so that when every one was "pulled" the doll could be provided with a complete outfit. Others were making hats and caps. The paper is rolled round a tin to shape, pasted together, and there is your *chapeau*. All is very simple, but nothing could be more effective when the article is completed.

The cardboard alone used in the manufacture of the empty boxes in which the crackers are packed exceeds a hundred tons in weight during a single season, and the tiny strips of card constituting the detonators over five tons. Twenty tons of glue and paste, between 6,000 and 7,000



CUTTING THE PAPERS.

reams of coloured and fancy papers are used, whilst the total weight of the thin transparent sheets of coloured gelatine, which add so much to the brilliancy of a Christmas cracker, amounts to nearly six tons.

The process by which gelatine is manufactured is a most interesting one. The raw gelatine comes over in five hundred-weight casks from Switzerland. It arrives on these shores in thick, rough sheets, measuring six feet by three feet, weighing



MAKING CRACKERS.



about three to four ounces each. It is then reduced to a liquid by steam power; water being added, it is clarified, and while in its liquid state dyes of the richest hues are poured in to render it of the shade of colour desired. While the gelatine is thus in a liquid form, it is poured upon frames of glass, measuring twenty-four inches by eighteen inches, much resembling

window panes. Workmen, by the movement of the glass, allow the melted gelatine to spread over it, and so form a sheet of uniform thickness. These sheets of glass are then arranged in stacks, and the film of gelatine allowed to set. When the gelatine sheets are hard upon the glass, they are then transferred to a room in which a strong current of air is allowed to pass in and out, to complete the drying process. This takes from twelve to eighteen hours, after which a knife is run round the edges of the gelatine, which then being cut with a knife peels easily off the glass, and is now ready for use.

We were curious to know what was the biggest cracker ever made. Crackers are made three feet long, containing a full-sized coat, hat, collar, frill, whiskers, umbrella, and eye-glass. A story is told of a well-known



MAKING CAPS.

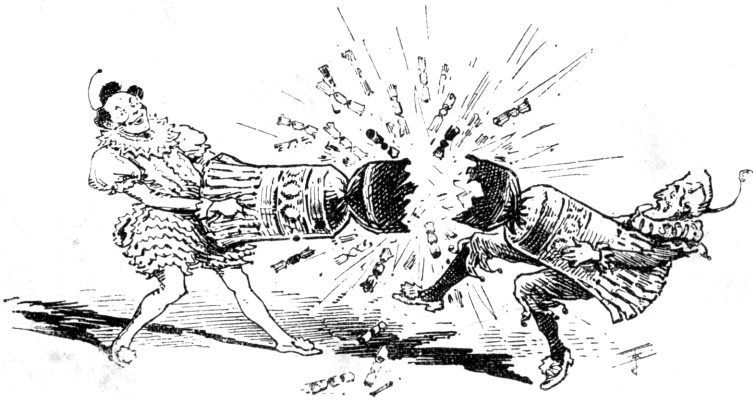
member of the aristocracy who entered a West-end shop one day and saw one of these gigantic crackers. He inquired the

couple to put on, and a multitude of crackers, which were thrown amongst the children in the audience.

size, and when he heard it, exclaimed :

"Three feet ! Not big enough for me. Just you order me three dozen crackers, each six feet long !"

The six feet crackers were made and delivered. Whether the nobleman congratulated himself on the fact that he had obtained the largest cracker up to date we do not know, but the biggest of all was that made every night for Harry Payne as clown to pull with the pantaloons in the pantomime at Drury Lane. It was seven feet long, and contained costumes large enough for the merry



Adventures of Sherlock Holmes.

ADVENTURE VI.—THE MAN WITH THE TWISTED LIP.

BY A. CONAN DOYLE.



ISA WHITNEY, brother of the late Elias Whitney, D.D., Principal of the Theological College of St. George's, was much addicted to opium.

The habit grew upon him, as I understand, from some foolish freak when he was at college, for having read De Quincey's description of his dreams and sensations, he had drenched his tobacco with laudanum in an attempt to produce the same effects. He found, as so many more have done, that the practice is easier to attain than to get rid of, and for many years he continued to be a slave to the drug, an object of mingled horror and pity to his friends and relatives. I can see him now, with yellow, pasty face, drooping lids and pin-point pupils, all huddled in a chair, the wreck and ruin of a noble man.

One night—it was in June, '89—there came a ring to my bell, about the hour when a man gives his first yawn, and glances at the clock. I sat up in my chair, and my wife laid her needlework down in her lap and made a little face of disappointment.

"A patient!" said she. "You'll have to go out."

I groaned, for I was newly come back from a weary day.

We heard the door open, a few hurried words, and then quick steps upon the linoleum. Our own door flew open, and a lady, clad in some lark-coloured stuff, with a black veil, entered the room.

"You will excuse my calling so late," she began, and then, suddenly losing her self-control, she ran forward, threw her arms about my wife's neck, and sobbed upon her shoulder. "Oh, I'm in such trouble!" she cried; "I do so want a little help."

"Why," said my wife, pulling up her veil, "it is Kate Whitney. How you startled me, Kate! I had not an idea who you were when you came in."

"I didn't know what to do, so I came

straight to you." That was always the way. Folk who were in grief came to my wife like birds to a lighthouse.

"It was very sweet of you to come. Now, you must have some wine and water, and sit here comfortably and tell us all about it. Or should you rather that I sent James off to bed?"

"Oh, no, no. I want the Doctor's advice and help too. It's about Isa. He has not been home for two days. I am so frightened about him!"

It was not the first time that she had spoken to us of her husband's trouble, to me as a doctor, to my wife as an old friend and school companion. We soothed and comforted her by such words as we could find. Did she know where her husband was? Was it possible that we could bring him back to her?

It seemed that it was. She had the surest information that of late he had, when the fit was on him, made use of an opium den in the furthest east of the City. Hitherto his orgies had always been confined to one day, and he had come back, twitching and shattered, in the evening. But now the spell had been upon him eight and forty hours, and he lay there, doubtless among the dregs of the docks, breathing in the poison or sleeping off the effects. There he was to be found, she was sure of it, at the "Bar of Gold," in Upper Swandam-lane. But what was she to do? How could she, a young and timid woman, make her way into such a place, and pluck her husband out from among the ruffians who surrounded him?

There was the case, and of course there was but one way out of it. Might I not escort her to this place? And, then, as a second thought, why should she come at all? I was Isa Whitney's medical adviser, and as such I had influence over him. I could manage it better if I were alone. I promised her on my word that I would send him home in a cab within two hours if he were indeed at the address which she

had given me. And so in ten minutes I had left my arm-chair and cheery sitting-room behind me, and was speeding eastward in a hansom on a strange errand, as it seemed to me at the time, though the future only could show how strange it was to be.

But there was no great difficulty in the first stage of my adventure. Upper Swandam-lane is a vile alley lurking behind the high wharves which line the north side of the river to the east of London Bridge. Between a slop shop and a gin shop, approached by a steep flight of steps leading down to a black gap like the mouth of a cave, I found the den of which I was in search. Ordering my cab to wait, I passed down the steps, worn hollow in the centre by the ceaseless tread of drunken feet, and by the light of a flickering oil lamp above the door I found the latch and made my way into a long, low room, thick and heavy with the brown opium smoke, and terraced with wooden berths, like the fore-castle of an emigrant ship.

Through the gloom one could dimly catch a glimpse of bodies lying in strange fantastic poses, bowed shoulders, bent knees, heads thrown back and chins pointing upwards, with here and there a dark, lack-lustre eye turned upon the new comer. Out of the black shadows there glimmered little red circles of light, now bright, now faint, as the burning poison waxed or waned in the bowls of the metal pipes. The most lay silent but some muttered to themselves, and others talked together in a strange, low, monotonous voice, their conversation coming in gushes, and then sud-

denly tailing off into silence, each mumbling out his own thoughts, and paying little heed to the words of his neighbour. At the further end was a small brazier of burning charcoal, besides which on a three-legged wooden stool there sat a tall, thin old man with his jaw resting upon his two fists, and his elbows upon his knees, staring into the fire.

As I entered, a sallow Malay attendant had hurried up with a pipe for me and a supply of the drug, beckoning me to an empty berth.

"Thank you, I have not come to stay," said I. "There is a friend of mine here, Mr. Isa Whitney, and I wish to speak with him."

There was a movement and an exclamation from my right, and, peering through the gloom, I saw Whitney, pale, haggard, and unkempt, staring out at me.

"My God! It's Watson," said he. He was in a pitiable state of reaction, with every nerve in a twitter. "Isay, Watson, what o'clock is it?"

"Nearly eleven."

"Of what day?"

"Of Friday, June 19."

"Good heavens! I thought it was Wednesday. It *is* Wednesday. What d'you want to frighten a chap for?" He sank his face on to his arms, and began to sob in a high treble key.

"I tell you that it is Friday, man. Your wife has been waiting this two days for you. You should be ashamed of yourself!"

"So I am. But you've got mixed, Watson, for I have only been here a few hours, three pipes, four pipes—I forget how many. But I'll go home with you. I



"STARING INTO THE FIRE."

wouldn't frighten Kate—poor little Kate. Give me your hand! Have you a cab?"

"Yes, I have one waiting."

"Then I shall go in it. But I must owe something. Find what I owe, Watson. I am all off colour. I can do nothing for myself."

I walked down the narrow passage between the double row of sleepers, holding my breath to keep out the vile, stupefying fumes of the drug, and looking about for the manager. As I passed the tall man who sat by the brazier I felt a sudden pluck at my skirt and a low voice whispered, "Walk past me, and then look back at me." The words fell quite distinctly upon my ear. I glanced down. They could only have come from the old man at my side, and yet he sat now as absorbed as ever, very thin, very wrinkled, bent with age, an opium

cry of astonishment. He had turned his back so that none could see him but I. His form had filled out, his wrinkles were gone, the dull eyes had regained their fire, and there, sitting by the fire, and grinning at my surprise, was none other than Sherlock Holmes. He made a slight motion to me to approach him, and instantly, as he turned his face half round to the company once more, subsided into a doddering, loose-lipped senility.

"Holmes!" I whispered, "what on earth are you doing in this den?"

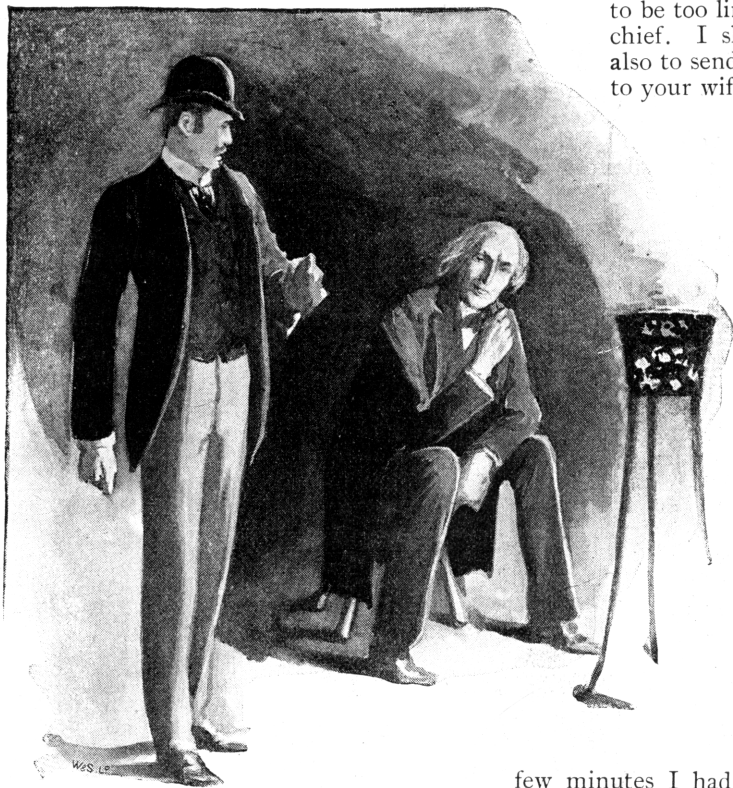
"As low as you can," he answered, "I have excellent ears. If you would have the great kindness to get rid of that sottish friend of yours I should be exceedingly glad to have a little talk with you."

"I have a cab outside."

"Then pray send him home in it. You may safely trust him, for he appears to be too limp to get into any mischief. I should recommend you also to send a note by the cabman to your wife to say that you have thrown in your lot with me. If you will wait outside, I shall be with you in five minutes."

It was difficult to refuse any of Sherlock Holmes' requests, for they were always so exceedingly definite, and put forward with such a quiet air of mastery. I felt, however, that when Whitney was once confined in the cab, my mission was practically accomplished; and for the rest, I could not wish anything better than to be associated with my friend in one of those singular adventures which were the normal condition of his existence. In a

few minutes I had written my note, paid Whitney's bill, led him out to the cab, and seen him driven through the darkness. In a very short time a decrepit figure had emerged from the opium den, and I was walking down the street with Sherlock Holmes. For two streets he shuffled along with a bent back and an uncertain foot.



"HOLMES!" I WHISPERED.

pipe dangling down from between his knees, as though it had dropped in sheer lassitude from his fingers. I took two steps forward and looked back. It took all my self-control to prevent me from breaking out into a

Then glancing quickly round, he straightened himself out and burst into a hearty fit of laughter.

"I suppose, Watson," said he, "that you imagine that I have added opium-smoking to cocaine injections and all the other little weaknesses on which you have favoured me with your medical views."

"I was certainly surprised to find you there."

"But not more so than I to find you."

"I came to find a friend."

"And I to find an enemy."

"An enemy?"

"Yes, one of my natural enemies, or shall I say, my natural prey. Briefly, Watson, I am in the midst of a very remarkable inquiry, and I have hoped to find a clue in the incoherent ramblings of these sots, as I have done before now. Had I been recognised in that den my life would not have been worth an hour's purchase, for I have used it before now for my own purposes, and the rascally Lascar who runs it has sworn to have vengeance upon me. There is a trap-door at the back of that building, near the corner of Paul's Wharf, which could tell some strange tales of what has passed through it upon the moonless nights."

"What! You do not mean bodies?"

"Aye, bodies, Watson. We should be rich men if we had a thousand pounds for every poor devil who has been done to death in that den. It is the vilest murder-trap on the whole river-side, and I fear that Neville St. Clair has entered it never to leave it more. But our trap should be here!" He put his two fore-fingers between his teeth and whistled shrilly, a signal which was answered by a similar whistle from the distance, followed shortly by the rattle of wheels and the clink of horses' hoofs.

"Now, Watson," said Holmes, as a tall dog-cart dashed up through the gloom, throwing out two golden tunnels of yellow light from its side lanterns. "You'll come with me, won't you?"

"If I can be of use."

"Oh, a trusty comrade is always of use. And a chronicler

still more so. My room at The Cedars is a double-bedded one."

"The Cedars?"

"Yes; that is Mr. St. Clair's house. I am staying there while I conduct the inquiry."

"Where is it, then?"

"Near Lee, in Kent. We have a seven-mile drive before us."

"But I am all in the dark."

"Of course you are. You'll know all about it presently. Jump up here! All right, John, we shall not need you. Here's half-a-crown. Look out for me to-morrow, about eleven. Give her her head! So long, then!"

He flicked the horse with his whip, and we dashed away through the endless succession of sombre and deserted streets, which widened gradually, until we were flying across a broad balustraded bridge, with the murky river flowing sluggishly beneath us. Beyond lay another dull wilderness of bricks and mortar, its silence broken only by the heavy, regular footfall of the policeman, or the songs and shouts of some belated party of revellers. A dull wrack was drifting slowly across the sky,



"HE FLICKED THE HORSE WITH HIS WHIP."

and a star or two twinkled dimly here and there through the rifts of the clouds. Holmes drove in silence, with his head sunk upon his breast, and the air of a man who is lost in thought, whilst I sat beside him, curious to learn what this new quest might be which seemed to tax his powers so sorely, and yet afraid to break in upon the current of his thoughts. We had driven several miles, and were beginning to get to the fringe of the belt of suburban villas, when he shook himself, shrugged his shoulders, and lit up his pipe with the air of a man who has satisfied himself that he is acting for the best.

"You have a grand gift of silence, Watson," said he. "It makes you quite invaluable as a companion. 'Pon my word, it is a great thing for me to have someone to talk to, for my own thoughts are not over pleasant. I was wondering what I should say to this dear little woman to-night when she meets me at the door."

"You forget that I know nothing about it."

"I shall just have time to tell you the facts of the case before we get to Lee. It seems absurdly simple, and yet, somehow, I can get nothing to go upon. There's plenty of thread, no doubt, but I can't get the end of it into my hand. Now, I'll state the case clearly and concisely to you, Watson, and maybe you may see a spark where all is dark to me."

"Proceed then."

"Some years ago—to be definite, in May, 1884—there came to Lee a gentleman, Neville St. Clair by name, who appeared to have plenty of money. He took a large villa, laid out the grounds very nicely, and lived generally in good style. By degrees he made friends in the neighbourhood, and in 1887 he married the daughter of a local brewer, by whom he has now had two children. He had no occupation, but was interested in several companies, and went into town as a rule in the morning, returning by the 5.14 from Cannon-street every night. Mr. St. Clair is now 37 years of age, is a man of temperate habits, a good husband, a very affectionate father, and a man who is popular with all who know him. I may add that his whole debts at the present moment, as far as we have been able to ascertain, amount to £88 10s., while he has £220 standing to his credit in the Capital and Counties Bank. There is no reason, therefore, to think that money troubles have been weighing upon his mind.

"Last Monday Mr. Neville St. Clair went into town rather earlier than usual, remarking before he started that he had two important commissions to perform, and that he would bring his little boy home a box of bricks. Now, by the merest chance his wife received a telegram upon this same Monday, very shortly after his departure, to the effect that a small parcel of considerable value which she had been expecting was waiting for her at the offices of the Aberdeen Shipping Company. Now, if you are well up in your London, you will know that the office of the company is in Fresno-street, which branches out of Upper Swandam-lane, where you found me to-night. Mrs. St. Clair had her lunch, started for the City, did some shopping, proceeded to the company's office, got her packet, and found herself exactly at 4.35 walking through Swandam-lane on her way back to the station. Have you followed me so far?"

"It is very clear.

"If you remember, Monday was an exceedingly hot day, and Mrs. St. Clair walked slowly, glancing about in the hope of seeing a cab, as she did not like the neighbourhood in which she found herself. While she walked in this way down Swandam-lane she suddenly heard an ejaculation or cry, and was struck cold to see her husband looking down at her, and, as it seemed to her, beckoning to her from a second-floor window. The window was open, and she distinctly saw his face, which she describes as being terribly agitated. He waved his hands frantically to her, and then vanished from the window so suddenly that it seemed to her that he had been plucked back by some irresistible force from behind. One singular point which struck her quick feminine eye was that, although he wore some dark coat, such as he had started to town in, he had on neither collar nor necktie.

"Convinced that something was amiss with him, she rushed down the steps—for the house was none other than the opium den in which you found me to-night—and, running through the front room, she attempted to ascend the stairs which led to the first floor. At the foot of the stairs, however, she met this Lascar scoundrel of whom I have spoken, who thrust her back, and, aided by a Dane, who acts as assistant there, pushed her out into the street. Filled with the most maddening doubts and fears, she rushed down the lane, and, by rare good fortune, met, in Fresno-street, a num-



"AT THE FOOT OF THE STAIRS SHE MET THIS LASCAR SCOUNDREL."

ber of constables with an inspector, all on their way to their beat. The inspector and two men accompanied her back, and, in spite of the continued resistance of the proprietor, they made their way to the room in which Mr. St. Clair had last been seen. There was no sign of him there. In fact, in the whole of that floor there was no one to be found, save a crippled wretch of hideous aspect, who, it seems, made his home there. Both he and the Lascar stoutly swore that no one else had been in the front room during the afternoon. So determined was their denial that the inspector was staggered, and had almost come to believe that Mrs. St. Clair had been deluded when, with a cry, she sprang at a small deal box

which lay upon the table, and tore the lid from it. Out there fell a cascade of children's bricks. It was the toy which he had promised to bring home.

"This discovery, and the evident confusion which the cripple showed, made the inspector realise that the matter was serious. The rooms were carefully examined, and results all pointed to an abominable crime. The front room was plainly furnished as a sitting-room, and led into a small bedroom, which looked out upon the back of one of the wharves. Between the wharf and the bedroom window is a narrow strip, which is dry at low tide, but is covered at high tide with at least four and a half feet of water. The bedroom window was a broad one, and opened from below. On examination traces of blood were to be seen upon the window sill, and several scattered drops were visible upon the wooden floor of the bedroom. Thrust away behind a curtain in the front room were all the clothes of Mr. Neville St. Clair, with the exception of his coat. His boots, his socks, his hat, and his watch—all were there. There were no signs of violence upon any of these garments, and there were no other traces of Mr. Neville St. Clair. Out of the window he must apparently have gone, for no other exit could be discovered, and the ominous bloodstains upon the sill gave little promise that he could save himself by swimming, for the

tide was at its very highest at the moment of the tragedy.

"And now as to the villains who seemed to be immediately implicated in the matter. The Lascar was known to be a man of the vilest antecedents, but as by Mrs. St. Clair's story he was known to have been at the foot of the stair within a very few seconds of her husband's appearance at the window, he could hardly have been more than an accessory to the crime. His defence was one of absolute ignorance, and he protested that he had no knowledge as to the doings of Hugh Boone, his lodger, and that he could not account in any way for the presence of the missing gentleman's clothes.

"So much for the Lascar manager. Now

for the sinister cripple who lives upon the second floor of the opium den, and who was certainly the last human being whose eyes rested upon Neville St. Clair. His name is Hugh Boone, and his hideous face is one which is familiar to every man who goes much to the City. He is a professional beggar, though in order to avoid the police regulations he pretends to a small trade in wax vestas. Some little distance down Threadneedle-street upon the left hand side there is, as you may have remarked, a small angle in the wall. Here it is that the creature takes his daily seat, cross-legged, with his tiny stock of matches on his lap, and as he is a piteous spectacle a small rain of charity descends into the greasy leather cap which lies upon the pavement beside him. I have watched the fellow more than once, before ever I thought of making his professional acquaintance, and I have been surprised at the harvest which he has reaped in a short time. His appearance, you see, is so remarkable, that no one can pass

him without observing him. A shock of orange hair, a pale face disfigured by a horrible scar, which, by its contraction, has turned up the outer edge of his upper lip, a bull-dog chin, and a pair of very penetrating dark eyes, which present a singular contrast to the colour of his hair, all mark him out from amid the common crowd of mendicants, and so, too, does his wit, for he is ever ready with a reply to any piece of chaff which may be thrown at him by the passers-by. This is the man whom we now learn to have been the lodger at the opium den,

and to have been the last man to see the gentleman of whom we are in quest."

"But a cripple!" said I. "What could he have done singlehanded against a man in the prime of life?"

"He is a cripple in the sense that he walks with a limp; but, in other respects, he appears to be a powerful and well-nurtured man. Surely your medical experience would tell you, Watson, that weakness in one limb is often compensated for by exceptional strength in the others."

"Pray continue your narrative."

"Mrs. St. Clair had fainted at the sight of the blood upon the window, and she was escorted home in a cab by the police, as her presence could be of no help to them in their investigations. Inspector Barton, who had charge of the case, made a very careful examination of the premises, but without finding anything which threw any light upon the matter. One mistake had been made in not arresting Boone instantly, as he was allowed some few minutes during



"HE IS A PROFESSIONAL BEGGAR."

which he might have communicated with his friend the Lascar, but this fault was soon remedied, and he was seized and searched, without anything being found which could incriminate him. There were, it is true, some bloodstains upon his right shirt-sleeve, but he pointed to his ring finger, which had been cut near the nail, and explained that the bleeding came from there, adding that he had been to the window not long before, and that the stains which had been observed there came doubtless from the same source. He denied

strenuously having ever seen Mr. Neville St. Clair, and swore that the presence of the clothes in his room was as much a mystery to him as to the police. As to Mrs. St. Clair's assertion that she had actually seen her husband at the window, he declared that she must have been either mad or dreaming. He was removed, loudly protesting, to the police station, while the inspector remained upon the premises in the hope that the ebbing tide might afford some fresh clue.

"And it did, though they hardly found upon the mudbank what they had feared to find. It was Neville St. Clair's coat, and not Neville St. Clair, which lay uncovered as the tide receded. And what do you think they found in the pockets?"

"I cannot imagine."

"No, I don't think you would guess. Every pocket stuffed with pennies and half-pennies—four hundred and twenty-one pennies, and two hundred and seventy half-pennies. It was no wonder that it had not been swept away by the tide. But a human body is a different matter. There is a fierce eddy between the wharf and the house. It seemed likely enough that the weighted coat had remained when the stripped body had been sucked away into the river."

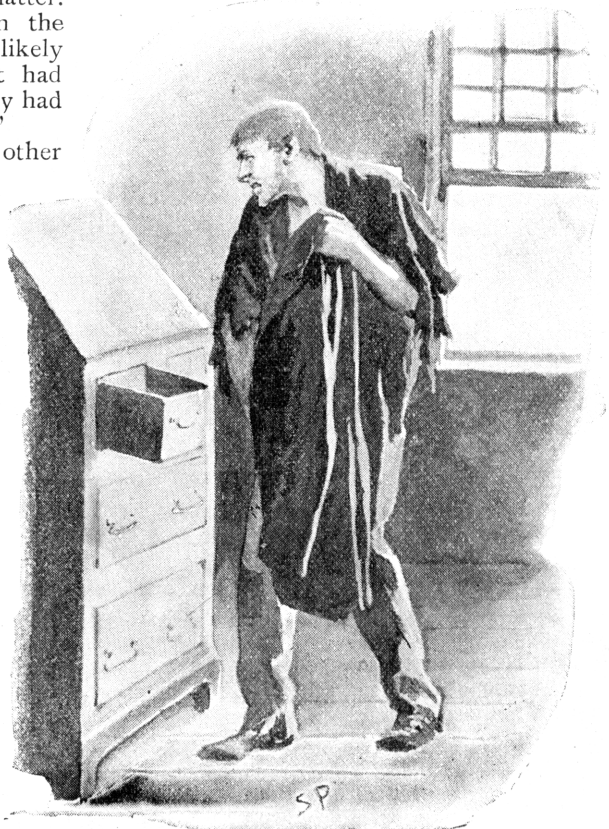
"But I understand that all the other clothes were found in the room. Would the body be dressed in a coat alone?"

"No, sir, but the facts might be met speciously enough. Suppose that this man Boone had thrust Neville St. Clair through the window, there is no human eye which could have seen the deed. What would he do then? It would of course instantly strike him that he must get rid of the tell-tale garments. He would seize the coat then, and be in the act of throwing it out when it would occur to him that it would swim and not sink. He has little time, for he has heard the scuffle downstairs when the wife tried to force her way up, and perhaps he has already heard from his Lascar confederate that the police are hurrying up the street. There is not an instant to be lost. He rushes to some secret horde, where he has accumulated the

fruits of his beggary, and he stuffs all the coins upon which he can lay his hands into the pockets to make sure of the coat's sinking. He throws it out, and would have done the same with the other garments had not he heard the rush of steps below, and only just had time to close the window when the police appeared."

"It certainly sounds feasible."

"Well, we will take it as a working hypothesis for want of a better. Boone, as I have told you, was arrested and taken to the station, but it could not be shown that there had ever before been anything against him. He had for years been known as a professional beggar, but his life appeared to have been a very quiet and innocent one. There the matter stands at present, and the questions which have to be solved, what Neville St. Clair was doing in the opium den, what happened to him when there, where is he now, and what Hugh Boone had to do with his disappearance, are all as far from a solution as ever. I confess



"STUFFS ALL THE COINS INTO THE POCKETS."

that I cannot recall any case within my experience which looked at the first glance so simple, and yet which presented such difficulties."

Whilst Sherlock Holmes had been detailing this singular series of events we had been whirling through the outskirts of the great town until the last straggling houses had been left behind, and we rattled along with a country hedge upon either side of us. Just as he finished, however, we drove through two scattered villages, where a few lights still glimmered in the windows.

"We are on the outskirts of Lee," said my companion. "We have touched on three English counties in our short drive, starting in Middlesex, passing over an angle of Surrey, and ending in Kent. See that light among the trees? That is The Cedars, and beside that lamp sits a woman whose anxious ears have already, I have little doubt, caught the clink of our horse's feet."

"But why are you not conducting the case from Baker-street?" I asked.

"Because there are many inquiries which must be made out here. Mrs. St. Clair has most kindly put two rooms at my disposal, and you may rest assured that she will have nothing but a welcome for my friend and colleague. I hate to meet her, Watson, when I have no news of her husband. Here we are. Whoa, there, whoa!"

We had pulled up in front of a large villa which stood within its own grounds. A stable-boy had run out to the horse's head, and, springing down, I followed Holmes up the small, winding gravel drive which led to the house. As we approached, the door flew open, and a little blonde woman stood in the opening, clad in some sort of light mousseline de soie, with a touch of fluffy pink chiffon at her neck and wrists. She stood with her figure outlined against the flood of light, one hand upon the door, one half raised in her eagerness, her body slightly bent, her head and face protruded, with eager eyes and parted lips, a standing question.

"Well?" she cried, "well?" And then, seeing that there were two of us, she gave a cry of hope which sank into a groan as she saw that my companion shook his head and shrugged his shoulders.

"No good news?"

"None."

"No bad?"

"No."

"Thank God for that. But come in.

You must be weary, for you have had a long day."

"This is my friend, Dr. Watson. He has been of most vital use to me in several of my cases, and a lucky chance has made it possible for me to bring him out and associate him with this investigation."

"I am delighted to see you," said she, pressing my hand warmly. "You will, I am sure, forgive anything which may be wanting in our arrangements, when you consider the blow which has come so suddenly upon us."

"My dear madam," said I, "I am an old campaigner, and if I were not, I can very well see that no apology is needed. If I can be of any assistance, either to you or to my friend here, I shall be indeed happy."

"Now, Mr. Sherlock Holmes," said the lady, as we entered a well-lit dining-room, upon the table of which a cold supper had been laid out. "I should very much like to ask you one or two plain questions, to which I beg that you will give a plain answer."

"Certainly, madam."

"Do not trouble about my feelings. I am not hysterical, nor given to fainting. I simply wish to hear your real, real opinion."

"Upon what point?"

"In your heart of hearts do you think that Neville is alive?"

Sherlock Holmes seemed to be embarrassed by the question. "Frankly now!" she repeated, standing upon the rug, and looking keenly down at him, as he leaned back in a basket chair.

"Frankly then, madam, I do not."

"You think that he is dead?"

"I do."

"Murdered?"

"I don't say that. Perhaps."

"And on what day did he meet his death?"

"On Monday."

"Then perhaps, Mr. Holmes, you will be good enough to explain how it is that I have received a letter from him to-day."

Sherlock Holmes sprang out of his chair as if he had been galvanised.

"What!" he roared.

"Yes, to-day." She stood smiling, holding up a little slip of paper in the air.

"May I see it?"

"Certainly."

He snatched it from her in his eagerness, and smoothing it out upon the table, he drew over the lamp, and examined it



“‘FRANKLY, NOW,’ SHE REPEATED.”

intently. I had left my chair, and was gazing at it over his shoulder. The envelope was a very coarse one, and was stamped with the Gravesend post-mark, and with the date of that very day, or rather of the day before, for it was considerably after midnight.

“Coarse writing!” murmured Holmes. “Surely this is not your husband’s writing, madam.”

“No, but the enclosure is.”

“I perceive also that whoever addressed the envelope had to go and inquire as to the address.”

“How can you tell that?”

“The name, you see, is in perfectly black ink, which has dried itself. The rest is of the greyish colour which shows that blotting-paper has been used. If it had been written straight off, and then blotted, none would be of a deep black shade. This man has written the name, and there has then been a pause before he wrote the address, which can only mean that he was not familiar with it. It is, of course, a trifle, but there is nothing so important as trifles. Let us now see the letter! Ha! there has been an enclosure here!”

“Yes, there was a ring. His signet ring.”

“And you are sure that this is your husband’s hand?”

“One of his hands.”

“One?”

“His hand when he wrote hurriedly. It is very unlike his usual writing, and yet I know it well.”

“Dearest, do not be frightened. All will come well. There is a huge error which it may take some little time to rectify. Wait in patience. — Neville. Written in pencil upon the fly-leaf of a book, octavo size, no watermark. Hum! Posted to-day in Gravesend by a man with a dirty thumb. Ha! And the flap has been gummed, if I am not very much in error, by a person

who had been chewing tobacco. And you have no doubt that it is your husband’s hand, madam?”

“None. Neville wrote those words.”

“And they were posted to-day at Gravesend. Well, Mrs. St. Clair, the clouds lighten, though I should not venture to say that the danger is over.”

“But he must be alive, Mr. Holmes.”

“Unless this is a clever forgery to put us on the wrong scent. The ring, after all, proves nothing. It may have been taken from him.”

“No, no; it is, it is, it is his very own writing!”

“Very well. It may, however, have been written on Monday, and only posted to-day.”

“That is possible.”

“If so, much may have happened between.”

“Oh, you must not discourage me, Mr. Holmes. I know that all is well with him. There is so keen a sympathy between us that I should know if evil came upon him. On the very day that I saw him last he cut himself in the bedroom, and yet I in the dining-room rushed upstairs instantly with the utmost certainty that something had happened. Do you think that I would respond to such a trifle, and yet be ignorant of his death?”

"I have seen too much not to know that the impression of a woman may be more valuable than the conclusion of an analytical reasoner. And in this letter you certainly have a very strong piece of evidence to corroborate your view. But if your husband is alive, and able to write letters, why should he remain away from you?"

"I cannot imagine. It is unthinkable."

"And on Monday he made no remarks before leaving you?"

"No."

"And you were surprised to see him in Swandam-lane?"

"Very much so."

"Was the window open?"

"Yes."

"Then he might have called to you?"

"He might."

"He only, as I understand, gave an inarticulate cry?"

"Yes."

"A call for help, you thought?"

"Yes. He waved his hands."

"But it might have been a cry of surprise. Astonishment at the unexpected sight of you might cause him to throw up his hands?"

"It is possible."

"And you thought he was pulled back?"

"He disappeared so suddenly."

"He might have leaped back. You did not see anyone else in the room?"

"No, but this horrible man confessed to having been there, and the Lascar was at the foot of the stairs."

"Quite so. Your husband, as far as you could see, had his ordinary clothes on?"

"But without his collar or tie. I distinctly saw his bare throat."

"Had he ever spoken of Swandam-lane?"

"Never."

"Had he ever shown any signs of having taken opium?"

"Never."

"Thank you, Mrs. St. Clair. Those are the principal points about which I wished to be absolutely clear. We shall now have a little supper and then retire, for we may have a very busy day to-morrow."

A large and comfortable double-bedded room had been placed at our disposal, and I was quickly between the sheets, for I was weary after my night of adventure. Sherlock Holmes was a man, however, who when he had an unsolved problem upon his mind would go for days, and even for a week, without rest, turning it over, rearranging his facts, looking at it from every point of

view, until he had either fathomed it, or convinced himself that his data were insufficient. It was soon evident to me that he was now preparing for an all night sitting. He took off his coat and waistcoat, put on a large blue dressing gown, and then wandered about the room collecting pillows from his bed, and cushions from the sofa and arm-chairs. With these he constructed a sort of Eastern divan, upon which he perched himself cross-legged, with an ounce of shag tobacco and a box of matches laid out in front of him. In the dim light of the lamp I saw him sitting there, an old brier pipe between his lips, his eyes fixed vacantly upon the corner of the ceiling, the blue smoke curling up from him, silent, motionless, with the light shining upon his strong set aquiline features. So he sat as I dropped off to sleep, and so he sat when a sudden ejaculation caused me to wake up, and I found the summer sun shining into the apartment. The pipe was still between his lips, the smoke still curled upwards, and the room was full of a dense tobacco haze, but nothing remained of the heap of shag which I had seen upon the previous night.

"Awake, Watson?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Game for a morning drive?"

"Certainly."

"Then dress. No one is stirring yet, but I know where the stable boy sleeps, and we shall soon have the trap out." He chuckled to himself as he spoke, his eyes twinkled, and he seemed a different man to the sombre thinker of the previous night.

As I dressed I glanced at my watch. It was no wonder that no one was stirring. It was twenty-five minutes past four. I had hardly finished when Holmes returned with the news that the boy was putting in the horse.

"I want to test a little theory of mine," said he, pulling on his boots. "I think, Watson, that you are now standing in the presence of one of the most absolute fools in Europe. I deserve to be kicked from here to Charing-cross. But I think I have the key of the affair now."

"And where is it?" I asked, smiling.

"In the bath-room," he answered. "Oh, yes, I am not joking," he continued, seeing my look of incredulity. "I have just been there, and I have taken it out, and I have got it in this Gladstone bag. Come on, my boy, and we shall see whether it will not fit the lock."

We made our way downstairs as quietly



"THE PIPE WAS STILL BETWEEN HIS LIPS."

as possible, and out into the bright morning sunshine. In the road stood our horse and trap, with the half-clad stable boy waiting at the head. We both sprang in, and away we dashed down the London-road. A few country carts were stirring, bearing in vegetables to the metropolis, but the lines of villas on either side were as silent and lifeless as some city in a dream.

"It has been in some points a singular case," said Holmes, flicking the horse on into a gallop. "I confess that I have been as blind as a mole, but it is better to learn wisdom late, than never to learn it at all."

In town, the earliest risers were just beginning to look sleepily from their windows as we drove through the streets of the Surrey side. Passing down the Waterloo Bridge-road we crossed over the river, and dashing up Wellington-street wheeled sharply to the right, and found ourselves in Bow-street. Sherlock Holmes was well known to the Force, and the two constables at the door saluted him. One of them held the horse's head while the other led us in.

"Who is on duty?" asked Holmes.

"Inspector Bradstreet, sir."

"Ah, Bradstreet, how are you?" A tall, stout official had come down the stone-flagged passage, in a peaked cap and frogged

jacket. "I wish to have a quiet word with you, Bradstreet."

"Certainly, Mr. Holmes. Step into my room here."

It was a small office-like room, with a huge ledger upon the table, and a telephone projecting from the wall. The inspector sat down at his desk.

"What can I do for you, Mr. Holmes?"

"I called about that beggarman, Boone—the one who was charged with being concerned in the disappearance of Mr. Neville St. Clair, of Lee."

"Yes. He was brought up and remanded for further inquiries."

"So I heard. You have him here?"

"In the cells."

"Is he quiet?"

"Oh, he gives no trouble. But he is a dirty scoundrel."

"Dirty?"

"Yes, it is all we can do to make him wash his hands, and his face is as black as a tinker's. Well, when once his case has been settled he will have a regular prison bath; and I think, if you saw him, you would agree with me that he needed it."

"I should like to see him very much."

"Would you? That is easily done. Come this way. You can leave your bag."

"No, I think that I'll take it."

"Very good. Come this way, if you please." He led us down a passage, opened a barred door, passed down a winding stair, and brought us to a white-washed corridor with a line of doors on each side.

"The third on the right is his," said the inspector. "Here it is!" He quietly shot back a panel in the upper part of the door, and glanced through.

"He is asleep," said he. "You can see him very well."

We both put our eyes to the grating. The prisoner lay with his face towards us, in a very deep sleep, breathing slowly and heavily. He was a middle-sized man, coarsely clad as became his calling, with a coloured shirt protruding through the rents in his tattered coat. He was, as the inspector had said, extremely dirty, but the grime which covered his face could not con-

ceal its repulsive ugliness. A broad wheal from an old scar ran right across it from eye to chin, and by its contraction had turned up one side of the upper lip, so that three teeth were exposed in a perpetual snarl. A shock of very bright red hair grew low over his eyes and forehead.

"He's a beauty, isn't he?" said the inspector.

"He certainly needs a wash," remarked Holmes. "I had an idea that he might, and I took the liberty of bringing the tools with me." He opened his Gladstone bag as he spoke, and took out, to my astonishment, a very large bath sponge.

"He! he! You are a funny one," chuckled the inspector.

"Now, if you will have the great goodness to open that door very quietly, we will soon make him cut a much more respectable figure."

"Well, I don't know why not," said the inspector. "He doesn't look a credit to the Bow-street cells, does he?" He slipped his key into the lock, and we all very quietly entered the cell. The sleeper half turned, and then settled down

once more into a deep slumber. Holmes stooped to the water jug, moistened his sponge, and then rubbed it twice vigorously across and down the prisoner's face.

"Let me introduce you," he shouted, "to Mr. Neville St. Clair, of Lee, in the county of Kent."

Never in my life have I seen such a sight. The man's face peeled off under the sponge like the bark from a tree. Gone was the

coarse brown tint! Gone, too, the horrid scar which had seamed it across, and the twisted lip which had given the repulsive sneer to the face! A twitch brought away the tangled red hair, and there, sitting up in his bed, was a pale, sad-faced, refined-looking man, black-haired and smooth-skinned, rubbing his eyes, and staring about him with sleepy bewilderment. Then suddenly realising the exposure, he broke into a scream, and threw himself down with

his face to the pillow.

"Great heaven!" cried the inspector, "it is, indeed, the missing man. I know him from the photograph."

The prisoner turned with the reckless air of a man who abandons himself to his destiny. "Be it so," said he. "And pray, what am I charged with?"

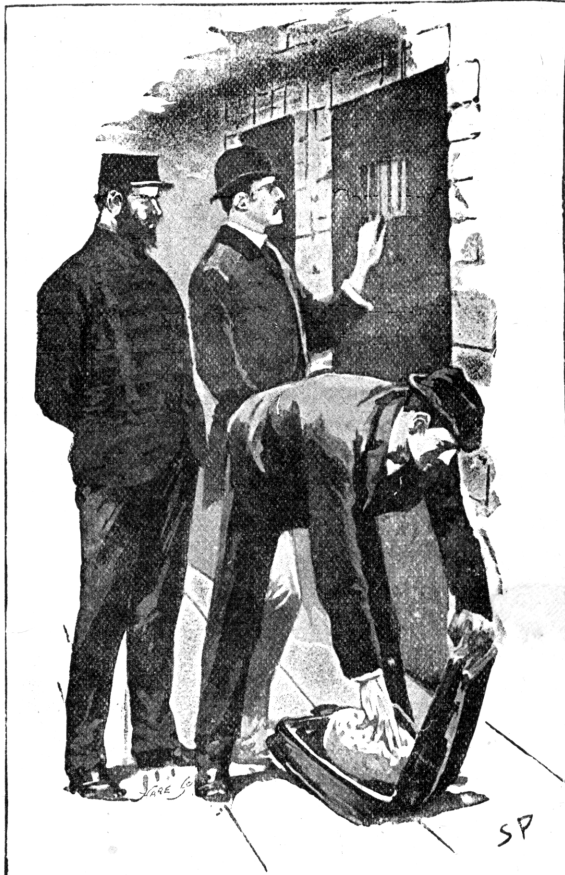
"With making away with Mr. Neville St.— Oh, come, you can't be charged with that, unless they make a case of attempted suicide of it," said the inspector, with a grin. "Well, I have been twenty-seven years in the force, but this really takes the cake."

"If I am Mr. Neville St. Clair,

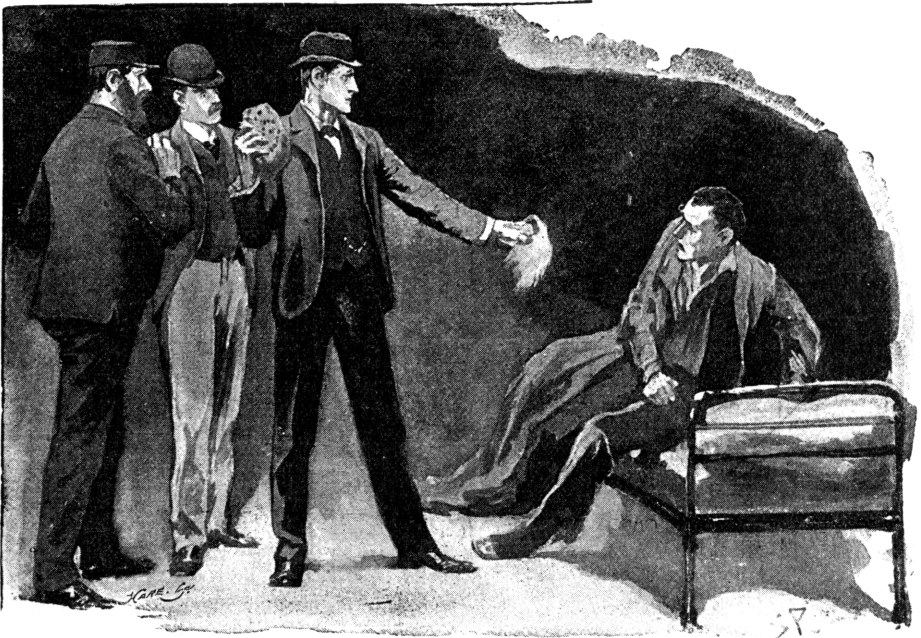
then it is obvious that no crime has been committed, and that, therefore, I am illegally detained."

"No crime, but a very great error has been committed," said Holmes. "You would have done better to have trusted your wife."

"It was not the wife, it was the children," groaned the prisoner. "God help me, I would not have them ashamed of their



"HE TOOK OUT A VERY LARGE BATH SPONGE."



"HE BROKE INTO A SCREAM."

father. My God! What an exposure! What can I do?"

Sherlock Holmes sat down beside him on the couch, and patted him kindly on the shoulder.

"If you leave it to a court of law to clear the matter up," said he, "of course you can hardly avoid publicity. On the other hand, if you convince the police authorities that there is no possible case against you, I do not know that there is any reason that the details should find their way into the papers. Inspector Bradstreet would, I am sure, make notes upon anything which you might tell us, and submit it to the proper authorities. The case would then never go into court at all."

"God bless you!" cried the prisoner, passionately. "I would have endured imprisonment, aye, even execution, rather than have left my miserable secret as a family blot to my children."

"You are the first who have ever heard my story. My father was a schoolmaster in Chesterfield, where I received an excellent education. I travelled in my youth, took to the stage, and finally became a reporter on an evening paper in London. One day my editor wished to have a series of articles upon begging in the metropolis, and I volunteered to supply them. There was the point from which all my adventures

started. "It was only by trying begging as an amateur that I could get the facts upon which to base my articles. When an actor I had, of course, learned all the secrets of making up, and had been famous in the green-room for my skill. I took advantage now of my attainments. I painted my face, and to make myself as pitiable as possible I made a good scar and fixed one side of my lip in a twist by the aid of a small slip of flesh-coloured plaster. Then with a red head of hair, and an appropriate dress, I took my station in the busiest part of the City, ostensibly as a match-seller, but really as a beggar. For seven hours I plied my trade, and when I returned home in the evening I found, to my surprise, that I had received no less than twenty-six shillings and fourpence."

"I wrote my articles, and thought little more of the matter until, some time later, I backed a bill for a friend, and had a writ served upon me for £25. I was at my wits' end where to get the money, but a sudden idea came to me. I begged a fortnight's grace from the creditor, asked for a holiday from my employers, and spent the time in begging in the City under my disguise. In ten days I had the money, and had paid the debt."

"Well, you can imagine how hard it was to settle down to arduous work at two

pounds a week, when I knew that I could earn as much in a day by smearing my face with a little paint, laying my cap on the ground, and sitting still. It was a long fight between my pride and the money, but the dollars won at last, and I threw up reporting, and sat day after day in the corner which I had first chosen, inspiring pity by my ghastly face, and filling my pockets with coppers. Only one man knew my secret. He was the keeper of a low den in which I used to lodge in Swandam-lane, where I could every morning emerge as a squalid beggar, and in the evenings transform myself into a well-dressed man about town. This fellow, a Lascar, was well paid by me for his rooms, so that I knew that my secret was safe in his possession.

"Well, very soon I found that I was saving considerable sums of money. I do not mean that any beggar in the streets of London could earn seven hundred pounds a year—which is less than my average takings—but I had exceptional advantages in my power of making up, and also in a facility in repartee, which improved by practice, and made me quite a recognised character in the City. All day a stream of pennies, varied by silver, poured in upon me, and it was a very bad day upon which I failed to take two pounds.

"As I grew richer I grew more ambitious, took a house in the country, and eventually married, without anyone having a suspicion as to my real occupation. My dear wife knew that I had business in the City. She little knew what.

"Last Monday I had finished for the day, and was dressing in my room above the opium den, when I looked out of the window, and saw, to my horror and astonishment, that my wife was standing in the street, with her eyes fixed full upon me. I gave a cry of surprise, threw up my arms to cover my face, and, rushing to my confidant, the Lascar, entreated him to prevent anyone from coming up to me. I heard her voice downstairs, but I knew that she could not ascend. Swiftly I threw off my clothes, pulled on those of a beggar, and put on my pigments and wig. Even a wife's eyes could not pierce so complete a disguise. But then it occurred to me that there might be a search in the room, and that the clothes might betray me. I threw open the window, re-opening by my violence a small cut which I had

inflicted upon myself in the bedroom that morning. Then I seized my coat, which was weighted by the coppers which I had just transferred to it from the leather bag in which I carried my takings. I hurled it out of the window, and it disappeared into the Thames. The other clothes would have followed, but at that moment there was a rush of constables up the stair, and a few minutes after I found, rather, I confess, to my relief, that instead of being identified as Mr. Neville St. Clair, I was arrested as his murderer.

"I do not know that there is anything else for me to explain. I was determined to preserve my disguise as long as possible, and hence my preference for a dirty face. Knowing that my wife would be terribly anxious, I slipped off my ring, and confided it to the Lascar at a moment when no constable was watching me, together with a hurried scrawl, telling her that she had no cause to fear."

"That note only reached her yesterday," said Holmes.

"Good God! What a week she must have spent."

"The police have watched this Lascar," said Inspector Bradstreet, "and I can quite understand that he might find it difficult to post a letter unobserved. Probably he handed it to some sailor customer of his, who forgot all about it for some days."

"That was it," said Holmes, nodding approvingly, "I have no doubt of it. But have you never been prosecuted for begging?"

"Many times; but what was a fine to me?"

"It must stop here, however," said Bradstreet. "If the police are to hush this thing up, there must be no more of Hugh Boone."

"I have sworn it by the most solemn oaths which a man can take."

"In that case I think that it is probable that no further steps may be taken. But if you are found again, then all must come out. I am sure, Mr. Holmes, that we are very much indebted to you for having cleared the matter up. I wish I knew how you reach your results."

"I reached this one," said my friend, "by sitting upon five pillows and consuming an ounce of shag. I think, Watson, that if we drive to Baker-street we shall just be in time for breakfast."



THE WINDING WALK

Moderato.

Words and Music by FRANK L. MOIR.

There's a wind-ing walk in a

mf

Ped. *

gar-den fair, With nut-trees o - ver - head, And ro - ses sweet, By the dear old seat, Per-

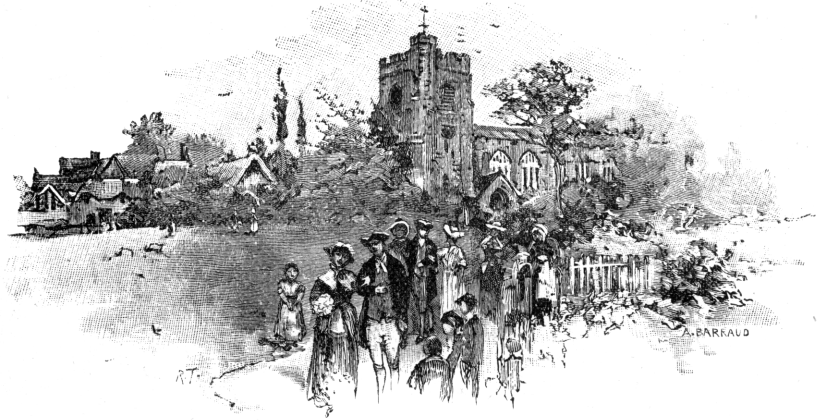
Cantabile.

- fum-ing the summer air: It was there we met in the long a - go, It was there we plighted

Cantabile.

Ped.

troth. Ah ! dear, dear days, 'Neath the shaded ways, Where we walk'd in our sun - lit youth.



There's a wind-ing walk by the vil-lage green, That leads to the dear old

Ped. *

church, Where the pop-lars sigh To the clear blue sky, And the swallows flit be-tween : It was

there we met on that sweet day, It was there they made us one; And the bells rang out, 'Mid the

f



mer - ry shout Of the children, who cheer'd us on. It's a winding walk thro' the

Più lento.

land of love, With the shadows o - ver - head, But from our true hearts All the gloom departs, And the

Tempo Imo.

light shines out a - bove. Take my hand, sweetheart, we must journey on; Say to me as you did that

Cantabile.

Ped.

day, 'Neath the rose-trees sweet By the dear old seat, "We will love till our days are done; We will

Ped. *

love, we will love, we will love till our days are done."

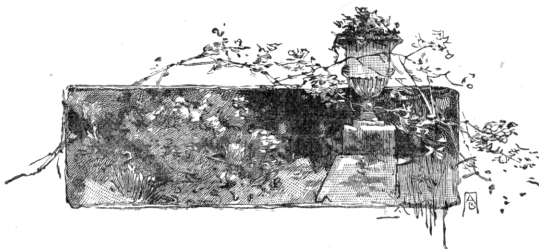
f ad lib.

cres.

Col canto al fine.

f

Ped.



A Day in the Country.

BY DAVID CHRISTIE MURRAY.



His name was Brown-Smith—he wrote it with a hyphen, and was hurt when people in familiar converse neglected to mark that fact—J. Brown-Smith. He was a poet, not a very fine one perhaps, but certainly not a very bad one. Years of practice had given him the literary trick, which goes for more than an uninstructed person would be apt to fancy, and he had a good heart and an unaffected love for all things beautiful and gracious. He wore a slouched hat and a long paletot, and sported a big russet beard and moustache, so that he looked rather like a brigand out of business, until his mild and beneficent eye bewrayed him. He was generally to be seen with the amber stem of a big meer-schaum between his lips, and he talked a good deal in a harmless way about Bohemia. When he had been younger Bohemia had had an actual existence, but Brown-Smith lived in the lights and shadows of a day which had for some time departed, and was faithful to traditions which were scorned by the majority of his compeers.

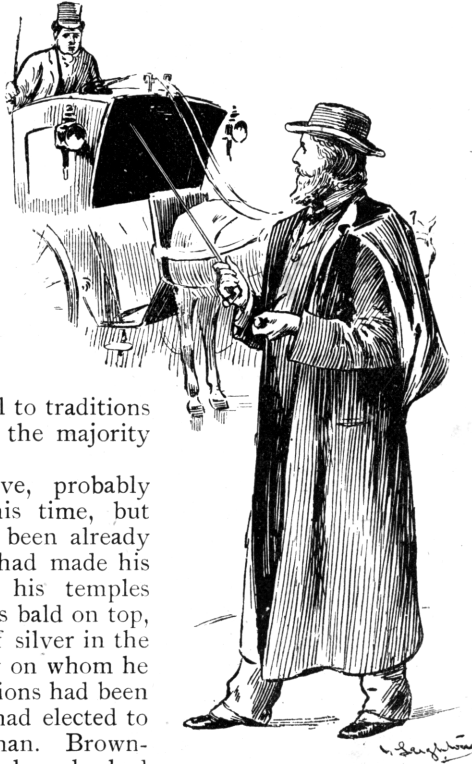
He had been in love, probably more than once in his time, but once at least. He had been already middle-aged when he had made his final choice, and now his temples were grizzled and he was bald on top, and there were lines of silver in the russet beard. The lady on whom he had bestowed his affections had been but half his age, and had elected to marry a much younger man. Brown-Smith proposed to her when she had been a month engaged, and, learning the truth, went away sorrowful, and made his verses his wife, and the cronies of his club his family circle.

It befell upon an autumn morning that

the breath of the dying year put him in mind of the country as he sat in his London lodgings, and awoke a craving in his mind for the sight of yellowing trees and misty pastures. Everybody he knew lived in town, and of late years, though he wrote a great deal about rural things, he had hardly seen the country at all. He hated constitutional walks and journeys without a purpose, and for awhile he could think of nowhere to go to. But on a sudden he bethought him of his old sweetheart, who was settled fifteen or sixteen miles away from London, and he fancied that it would not be an unpleasant thing to go down and look at her abiding-place. He had no idea

of calling upon her, or of intruding himself in any way. His clumsy and futile courtship was now a matter of ancient history, and the probabilities were that he was long ago forgotten. He had a notion that in one way the theme might be fruitful. His muse of late had been a little sterile, and perhaps the journey might prove to have a set of verses in it. That is the way of poets, and, indeed, of men of letters in general. Any little flower of emotion we may grow goes to market, and is more or less consciously nurtured and watered to that end. When we have been long at the business we are market gardeners pure and simple, and

grow rose, lily, and forget-me-not side by side with mandragora and the deadly hellebore, culling them and arranging them into bouquets to suit the fashion or



"HE HAILED A HANSON."

fancy of the moment. Brown-Smith arose, donned the sombrero and the long paletot, saw to it that his tobacco pouch and Britannia metal fusee box were well stocked, and, walking into the street, hailed a hansom. That was his constant habit. If ever he went further away from home than to his club, which was just round the corner, he went in a hansom. He hated railway carriages and omnibuses, and if he by rare chance tried to go anywhere on foot he succeeded only in losing himself, and had finally to call on a cabman to extricate him from the London maze. He had a handsome income of his own; indeed, if he had had a head for business, instead of rhyming, he might have been a wealthy man, and this was his sole extravagance. He was scarcely seated when the poetic spring began to show that it was wound up, and, whilst the cab clattered down Wellington-street and over Waterloo-bridge, the poet began to manufacture verses :—

Cabman, who pliest in the roaring Strand,
Sleepily pliest in the autumn weather,
Pause, at the signal of my waving hand,
And let's away together.

There at least was a beginning, and it hit the feeling of the moment. The measure, as the practised in such matters will observe, lends itself to gravity or gaiety, and the bard might glide from either to either, and might rumble along in sleepy musing between whiles. He got a verse in embryo out of a crowd of little children who danced about an organ, on the top of which a misanthropic ape scratched the hind quarter of disdain with the hand of dejection. Then in due time the lines of houses broke and scattered, and the cab ran between green fields. The poet filled and lit his pipe, and straightway the poetic spring gave another whirl :—

Lord ! how the flavour of that first fusee,
Blends with the grateful smell of trodden grasses,
And how I joy in every leafy tree
The hansom passes !

Then he was conscious of his old sweetheart's face. She looked in on him like an actual bodily presence, and surprised him. Another verse came quite naturally, and others flowed easily after it, though he gave them rather a disingenuous turn perhaps, considering the business which took him afield that morning :—

Why, Clare ! Sweet Clare ! No thought of your
bright eyes
Has touched my memory for half a lustre ;
And now how fast, with what a sweet surprise,
The fancies muster !

Lads play at love, and think it pleasant play,
And maidens find it, too, a pretty pastime,
Until the god himself descends some day
For first and last time.

He never came to you and me, sweet Clare—
You quite forget me, and I live without you ;
And only at a time like this I care
To think about you.

It was not altogether true, but the bard was not going to be over-sentimental. He was getting perilously near the fifties for one thing, and he was going out, of motive aforethought, to look at his old sweetheart's house. Perhaps, if he had formed no such purpose, he might have chosen another measure, and another method of expression. But, in the circumstances, if he must touch his ghost at all, perhaps it was well not to lay a finger of too much stress upon it. It slept, and had slept for many years. It would hardly pay to do more than half awaken it. He went on with his verse-spinning, and in a dreary, half-regretful way was happy. He did not often say a humorous thing, but his whole turn of mind was humorous, and he had never dared to take himself too seriously. Once in a way he had given his whole soul to a woman, but she had never cared for him, and he had been sent out of her presence with a sore heartache, which had faded away little by little into a tranquil regret with a sense of romance around it. These melancholies of the middle-aged are not unpleasant.

The journey came to an end, and the cabman pulled up quite naturally at a publichouse of the better sort, and Brown-Smith was welcomed at the door. Could he have luncheon there by and by ? Anything would serve. A little cold meat and a salad ? That would do. Their home-brewed was greatly esteemed in the neighbourhood, the curtsying landlady assured him. He would essay a glass at once, and so would the cabman. The cabman being appealed to, touched the brim of his hat and expressed a husky preference for something short. "Two of gin, if you please, ma'am." The bard drank his beer meditatively and slowly, and filled his pipe anew. He had meant to inquire of his old sweetheart's whereabouts. That was a simple thing enough, but the presence of the cabman somehow made it difficult, and when the driver had withdrawn with instructions to stable and feed his horse, and get a snack for himself in the tap-room, it seemed too late to proffer the inquiry. Brown-Smith was shy, in fine, and had a fear which he

himself confessed ridiculous, lest the sentimental character of his errand should be known.

He wandered out a little disconsolately into the lane. It was high noon, but there was an autumn mist abroad, and autumn gossamer, clogged thick with congested frost drops, showed everywhere in the hedges. The lane was carpeted thick with fallen leaves, and an earthy odour rose from them, reminding of a hundred memories, all more or less of a mildly sentimental kind. Except when the poetical watchspring set his internal works agoing, and the poetic musical-box sounded its pretty little inward tunes, Brown-Smith was, in the main, a mildly cheerful person. But to-day, what with the train in which his thoughts had started in the morning, and his propinquity to his old sweetheart, and the signs of lovely decay everywhere about, he grew to feel actually downcast and dejected. All the mistakes of his life rose up before him, all its failures and follies. He felt forlorn and old, and life in general seemed to be a very bitter business.

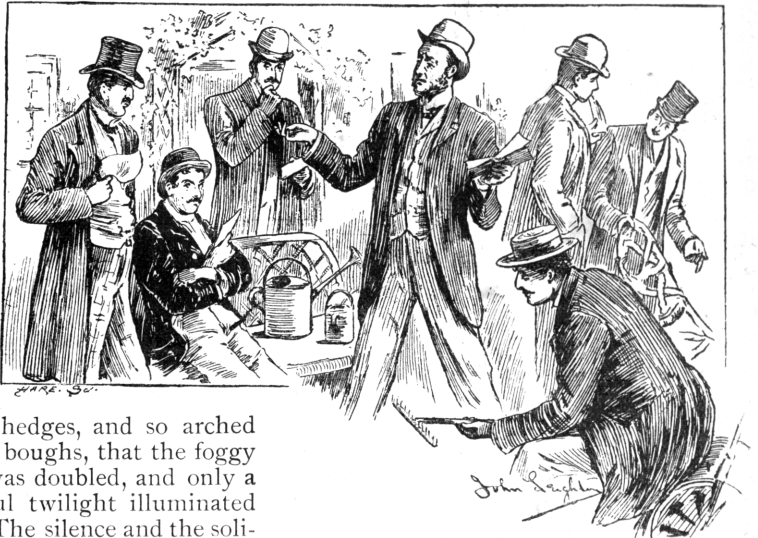
In this melancholy mood he wandered on, until it occurred to him that he had made half a dozen aimless turnings, and had no idea of his present whereabouts. He got lost in his favourite London once a week, but there he had always the ubiquitous cabman to appeal to. Here there was nobody. The lane in which he found himself was just wide enough for the passage of an ordinary vehicle, and was so walled in by thick-leaved hedges, and so arched over by embracing boughs, that the foggy gloom of the day was doubled, and only a damp and mournful twilight illuminated his surroundings. The silence and the solitude suited the mood into which he had allowed himself to fall, and, since he had made it a lifelong practice to surrender himself to his own fancies, he found it easy to give way to this. He arranged his long paletot so that he might take no damage from the moist grass, and, sitting down upon a bank by the roadside, took the

russet beard in both hands, and sat staring at the bank opposite like a model for a statue of a poet in reverie. Somebody might come by to guide him in a while; if not, no matter.

Just as he had arrived comfortably at the conclusion that there was nothing in the world in which it was worth while to be for a moment interested, he was recalled to his honest, natural self by the merest trifle of an incident, in the progress of which he immediately became absorbed.

"This way, gentlemen, if you please," said a voice at once suave and businesslike.

The poet turned, and looked across his shoulder in the direction of the voice. Just where he sat there was a slight gap in the hedge—a mere eyelet hole, large enough to afford him an unrestricted view, but so small that the hedge effectually concealed his presence. He saw before him a pretty little garden, a smooth-shaven lawn, and a small and unpretentious residence of the cottage-villa order. From its door emerged a bustling gentleman in a white hat, carrying a notebook in one hand and a pencil in the other. He was followed by some half-dozen men in various stages of dirty flashness, who had each and all beady eyes, and



"BROKERS."

red lips, and thick hooked noses, and who each carried in one hand a pamphlet and in the other a pencil. The bard immediately recognised these gentlemen as brokers, and he knew, without need of explanation, that a sale of household effects

was going on in the pretty retired little villa. The man in the white hat bustled forward into the middle of the lawn, and the thick-nosed contingent grouped about him at varying distances.

"You see the next lot before you, gentlemen," said the auctioneer. "Seven garden seats, various. One patent duplex-action lawn mower, an iron roller, three watering pots, spade, rake, and hoe. How much for this lot, gentlemen?"

The handful of brokers wandered unconcernedly about the lawn, inspecting the various articles offered for sale with depreciating aspect and gesture.

"Come, gentlemen," said the auctioneer, "we can't be here all day. How much? Give me a bid to start with."

"Ted bob," said one of the thick-nosed men.

"Oh, gentlemen, gentlemen!" cried the auctioneer, and became fluent, almost passionate, in laudatory criticism of the articles offered for sale. His voice took a tone of pathetically remonstrant indignation. "Ten shillings! Oh, really, really, gentlemen! Let us be reasonable!"

Another thick-nosed gentleman soared so high into the air of pure reason as to increase the bid by sixpence. The auctioneer expostulated. The goods were being thrown away. He was there to sell without reserve, but it was grievous and hardly to be borne that the things he had to offer should have to be knocked down at prices so far below their real value. The Hebraic crowd listened to his diatribes with a dreary patience; but, nobody offering a further bid for the garden seats, various, and the rest, the lot was knocked down, and the whole party, headed by the auctioneer, meandered back to the house again.

This little episode had inspired the unsuspected onlooker with a variety of emotions, and, after the manner of his tribe, he had profoundly pitied half a dozen imaginary persons before the scene was over. His bardic bosom had been fired with scorn for the handful of money-grubbers banded together to take advantage of the straits of the widow and the fatherless; but when the curtain had fallen on the trivial act he fell into a dejection more mournful than before, and gazed at the ivy-covered porch of the small villa as if he read in it a decree of mysterious and all-embracing doom.

As he looked, a small boy—a boy of five, or thereabouts—came out, nursing a puppy,

a smooth-haired, pot-bellied, helpless canine infant of a month or two. The boy, a sturdy little fellow, was evidently labouring under a sense of injury, which he did his best to conquer. He walked resolutely towards the poet, as if he had him in view, and plumping down on the wet grass within two yards of him, hugged his burden to his breast with a gesture so emphatic that the puppy uttered a yowk of remonstrance. At this the child released him, and the pup, in infantile glee, began, with a tottering jocundity, to charge about the lawn, and to bark with a pretence of valour at imagined intruders. He was at the age at which dogs learn to bark, and was obviously proud of his newly found accomplishment. When he had sufficiently asserted his own importance, and had expressed with especial vehemence his opinion of the people then within doors, he returned to his childish companion, and tumbled over him in an ecstasy of fawning affection. The boy gathered him up again in a loose armful, and began to cry silently, but at this instant a jeering call broke in upon his solitude, and the poet, peering through the leafy screen, saw a mean boy, a repulsive boy, with a face freckled all over like a toad's back, who had thrown one leg over the garden wall something less than a score of yards away.

"Yah!" said the freckled boy, "who's being sold up?"

At this the eyes of the infant with the puppy glittered suddenly, and his tears ceased. He clinched his white milk teeth, and put both arms about the puppy.

"Who's being sold up?" the repulsive boy repeated. "Yah!"

He detached small pieces of mortar from the top of the wall, and threw them at the object of his derision. Then, emboldened by the absence of retort, for he was obviously, at the first glance, a boy who loved to deride in safety, he threw the other leg over the wall, and dropped stealthily into the garden. Then, having assured himself by observation that his way of retreat was clear, and that, if need were, he could scale the wall before the enemy reached him, he threw a stone, and finding that this elicited no retort, he grew still bolder, and ventured forward. He was an older boy than the rightful occupant of the lawn, and topped him by three ungainly inches.

"Yah!" he said again, for he was a boy unfertile in resource, "who's being sold up?"

The little chap with the puppy was breathing hard, and to Brown-Smith's eye, looked likely to be dangerous. The poet had half a mind to steal silently along the lane until he found the gate, then to enter, and effect at least a momentary modification in the sentiment of the boy with the freckles. But he was a shy man, and contented himself with watching. The mean boy, quite secure by this time, stood over the object of his scorn, and goaded him still further.

"They've got the pup in the catalogue."

At this the smaller boy started to his feet, hugging his burden.

"No, they haven't," he said, defiantly, but yet with a tremor of doubt in his tone.

"Yes they have, though," said the freckled boy. "They're going to sell him."



"THE FRECKLED BOY WAS SMITTEN."

Not as he'll fetch much. Yah! You *have* got to be hard up before you'd sell a pup like that."

Then the pup and the bard and the boy with the freckles were all simultaneously startled. The pup was whirled wildly in air, the freckled boy was smitten with extreme violence on the very tip of his jeering nose, and the poet exulted, as a poet has a right to exult whenever he sees the trampled soul arise, and the tyrant tremble. The freckled boy was not valiant in fight, but he was robust of lung. He yelled manfully, and his screams brought out an excited nurse-girl, in a whirl of flounces.

"Look what your Bob's done," said the chastised tormentor. His nose was bleeding, and from the spectacle he presented there was no knowing what injury he had received.

"Oh, you bad, wicked, naughty, abominable child!" cried the nurse-girl, and in one second the champion of the right was on her knee, and every adjective took emphasis from a sounding slap. The little fellow struggled away from her and stood on the defensive.

"He said they'd sell my puppy."

"So they will," said the nurse-girl, spitefully angry. "I'll see to that. Oh, master Gordon, don't be making that noise, you'll have everybody thinking you're killed. Come indoors and let me wash your face."

With that she marched the discomfited intruder away. The puppy, at whose age emotions, however violent, are short lived, had forgotten his astonishment, and returned frisking to his playmate.

"They shan't sell you!" said the boy. "I won't let them sell you. You haven't done anything to be sold, have you, Tiny? Look here, I'll go away and be a cabin boy. I'll take you with me, and then they can't sell you."

He kissed the puppy on the nose, and set out at once, hot with determination. Brown-Smith arose with intent to meet the child at the gate and soothe the injured honour with the plaster of a new half-crown, bright from the mint, which he happened to carry in his purse. But before he had gained the gate the boy was in the lane, running as fast as his small legs would carry him.

"He won't go far," said the poet to himself, and refrained from quickening his own pace, lest he should frighten him.

After a burst of thirty or forty yards the adventurer fell into a jog trot, and from that into a walk. But the walk was dogged and full of purpose. The poet would not have been a poet if he had not remembered his own childhood. He, too, had risen, though many years ago, against abuse and tyranny with a soul which flamed with all the passionate valour which inspired Garibaldi or Kosciuszko. If all good men, so Brown-Smith mused, wistfully watching the little figure before him, kept the childish courage and the childish hate of tyranny the world would have had smooth going for the weakest long and long ago.

"We degenerate," said Brown-Smith. "The Hampden of five is a trimmer at five and twenty. The infant Cromwell grows up to vote at the order of a Caucus."

The boy walked on, and Brown-Smith followed him, recalling a certain experience of his own, when he too had, at the premature age of five, rushed to face the world. He recalled the fact that that determination had endured for some ten minutes, and he looked for the same rapid cooling of heroic intent in this case. The boy in front, however, held steadily on for a mile. By this time he had set down the puppy, who frisked irresponsibly at his heels. The poet began to find his long paletot oppressive, and disembarassing himself of it, threw it over his arm. What thoughts filled the child's mind beyond the rooted sense of injustice and resolve it would be difficult to tell, but he pegged away at his best pace, looking neither to left nor right, for a full hour. Brown-Smith admired his energy and determination, but began to hope that they would be of brief duration. On a sudden, the puppy, after a frantic burst of high spirits, lay down panting in the road, and refused to be allured or commanded further. In

the end, the child took him up again; but, in spite of anger and resolve, he was already growing weary, and when he had covered another hundred yards, he sat down upon a bank by the roadside to rest. The poet smilingly approached him and sat down.

"That's a nice little dog you have there," he said, by way of opening the conversation. The child looked shy, and returned no answer. "Do you think he would make friends with me? Let us see? He's tired, I fancy."

Brown-Smith's voice was naturally gentle, and his face was friendly and inviting. The child and the puppy, with the intuition natural to their several states and ages, trusted and believed in him at once.

"And where are we going to, my little man?" The boy hung his head at this query, and answered nothing. "Aren't we rather a long way from home? Do you know, it strikes me that if we go much further we shall lose ourselves. Don't you think we'd better be going back again?" No answer still. The boy fondled the head of the pup as he lay in Brown-Smith's lap, and looked up once at his strange companion. "Don't you think," asked Brown-



"THAT'S A NICE LITTLE DOG."

Smith, hazarding a guess, "that mamma will be likely to miss you?"

"She's gone away," said the child; "Betsy says she isn't coming back again."

"Now, do you know," said the poet, with an air of weight and gravity, "I don't believe in Betsy? I think it very likely that mamma's at home this minute. I don't *know*, mind you. I only say I think it very likely. Suppose we go and see."

"She went away this morning," the child answered. There was a catch in his voice, and the resolute corners of his mouth began to droop a little. "She went away before the sale, and Betsy says she's never coming back again."

"We won't trouble our heads about Betsy," said the bard, with an air of weightier decision than before. "Betsy's talking nonsense, evidently. Why, bless your soul," he continued, in a voice altogether convinced and intimate, "I daresay I'm twice as old as you are—three times as old, perhaps—and I never heard of such a thing. The idea of mamma going away and never coming back again! Why, that is obviously preposterous. Perhaps you don't know what it is to be obviously preposterous? But when a thing *is* obviously preposterous, people always laugh at it. I know that, because I have been obviously preposterous myself, and people have laughed at me."

This mild joke tickled him a little, and his own kindly humour had opened his heart, and made laughter easy. He laughed gaily, and his infant charge laughed also. The pup sat up in the bard's lap, and barked for company.

"Why, the little dog laughs to see such fun," Brown-Smith continued. "He knows when a thing is obviously preposterous, don't you, doggie? What's your name, old fellow?"

"His name's Tiny," said the infant wanderer, who was quite certain of his man by this time. "Mine's Bob. He's two months old, and I'm five years."

"How's Tiny going to be rated on the ship's books?" asked the poet. "Is he going to be a cabin boy?" The child looked at him half ashamed, and wholly wonderstricken. "I know a lot," said Brown-Smith, solemnly. "I could tell you a lot of things. I don't wonder at your punching Master Gordon, but perhaps you needn't have hit him quite so hard."

From that moment Brown-Smith's reputation was established. It was evident

that concealment was absolutely worthless with a man like that, and Bob was easily won to the relation of his own short and simple annals. Papa, it seems, had died ever so long ago, when Bob was little. "Less than I am now," he said, explanatorily. Mamma, of course, was mamma. They lived at the Fir Trees. He could give her a local habitation, but no name.

"Are you ever hungry?" Brown-Smith demanded. "I am."

He thought of the cold meat and salad ordered now two hours ago, and his inner man yearned at the fancy.

"We passed a nice place five minutes back. A place that looked to my mind as if it had milk and biscuits in it. Not at all an unlikely place for cake, I should fancy. There might even be plum cake there. I knew a place of that sort once, where they had plum cake with frosted sugar on the top—frosted sugar as thick as that, upon my word of honour." He held up his thumb in illustration. "That's not a thing to be looked for every day," he hastened to add, "but still it might be there. Suppose we go and see, eh?"

The immediate resolution to escape from the tyrannies of Betsy, and to become a cabin boy, made itself air when the poet conjured up this splendid vision. Bob, resuming charge of the puppy, was hoisted on to Brown-Smith's shoulder, and presently the two invaded a tidy roadside inn, where, as good fortune would have it, plum cake and milk were actually obtainable. The poet himself sat down to beef and ale, and rejoiced wholesomely above them.

"You know this little gentleman?" Brown-Smith asked of the landlord.

"I've seen him afore," the landlord answered. "His mother's a widow. She lives about three mile from here. I did hear as she was to be sold up to-day."

"Have you such a thing as a trap handy?" asked the poet. "I should like to drive him home again."

The landlord had a trap, and in ten minutes it was ready.

"Drive to Mrs. Barton's, Jim," cried the landlord, and Brown-Smith started at the name, and even paled a little. The old sweetheart, about whom he had been spinning verses all the morning, bore that name. It was hardly likely that there were two Mrs. Bartons in the same outlying village. It was by no means an impossible thing that there should be two, but to his mind it seemed improbable. Was his old

love really a widow, and in distress? And could it be really her child in whom he had taken a passing and kindly interest? He scanned the boy's face with a new eye, and even thought he read some likeness to her features in it. That might be no more than fancy, but it was enough to set his heart fluttering. That organ had so long been quiet that its mild disturbance seemed almost volcanic to him. He had never dreamed that anything would touch it again in this world. If the old Clara of his dreams were really free——

He sat on thorns through the brief journey, and answered the boy's prattle at absent random. Suddenly the trap turned a corner of the lane, and the gate was in sight. Nursemaid Betsy was there with a slight figure in grey beside her. They both turned at the sound of wheels, and the boy sang out "Mamma!" in a rejoicing treble. The poet raised his hat, and blushed like any schoolboy.

"Mrs. Barton," he said, as the trap came to a standstill, "I found your little boy some distance away from here, and I was afraid he might be lost. I have brought him back to you."

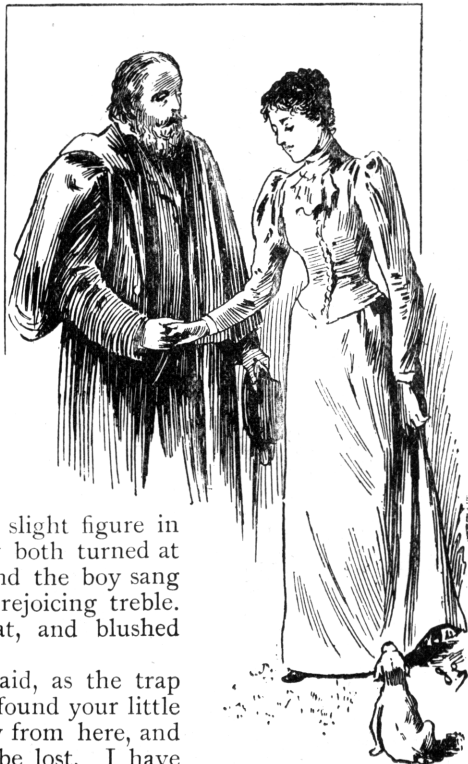
He alighted, and lifted the child to the ground. The young widow was pale, and looked as if she had known trouble. She was embarrassed, too, and accepted the poet's proffered hand with a shyness which, as he thought, became her very prettily. The ten years which had elapsed since he had seen her last had left her girlish still, and he thought how wonderfully little she had altered. The old roses would come back with prosperity and happiness. He was amazed to find himself as much in love with her as ever.

"We have not met for a long time," he said.

"No," she answered. "It is a long time since we met. You are a little changed, I think."

"Am I?" he responded. "I don't feel changed at all."

Here he remembered the hostler, and dismissed him with a fare which sent off that simple fellow in astonishment. Nursemaid Betsy, milder under the maternal eye than when free of its controlling influence, had led the child away. The puppy alone remained as a witness to the



"WE HAVE NOT MET FOR A LONG TIME," HE SAID.

interview, and he looked from one to the other with an inquiring sagacity, much as if he had expected things to take this turn so far, and were interested in the *dénouement*.

"I came down," said Brown-Smith, "on purpose to have a look at the place you lived in. I hope you don't think that a liberty."

She gave one brief glance at him, and lowered her eyes.

"I learn that you are lonely, Clara, and I am afraid from what I have seen and heard to-day that you are not too well to do. Excuse me, I am an old friend, you know, and I was always clumsy. If you could let me help you, Clara——"

He stopped there, not daring to speak

all his mind at once.

"I have a place to go to," she answered. "Some friends of mine have found me a situation."

"Don't take it, Clara!" said Brown-Smith, impulsively.

"What else is before me?" she asked.

"My dear!" said the poet, with a directness such as poets rarely use, "I am before you. Take me, and let the situation go. I am no younger than I was, and I thought, until I heard the truth to-day, that I had cured myself of my old fancy. I find I have not."

She murmured something about it being all so strange—so unexpected.

"Strange and unexpected to us both," he answered. "I have kept lonely for your sake all these years."

Five minutes later the wanderer, his desire for naval adventure clean forgotten, found mamma and the friendly stranger sitting side by side in a little arbour, and clambered without hesitation on the poet's knee.

"Mamma," he said, "this gentleman found me when I was going to sea to be a cabin-boy."

"A true bill," said the poet. He was so bright and smiling, and in spite of his grizzled temples looked so young again that, for the time at least, the last ten years of heartache and of loneliness might have been clean wiped away from him. The

little widow was smiling too, gravely and tenderly, and the roses of her youth were back again.

"I say," said Master Bob, boldly, dividing the poet's beard and looking up at him. "I told you what my name was. What's yours?"

"Mine?" asked the poet. "I am papa."

"Is that true, mamma?"

"Yes," said the little widow, taking the boy from his protector's knees and hiding her flushed face against his cheek. "It's quite true."

"Well," said Bob, with an accent of decision, "I call that jolly."



"I CALL THAT JOLLY."



QUIXARVYN'S RIVAL.

BY H. GREENHOUGH SMITH.



HE battle of Sedgemoor had been fought and lost. Night had come again, and in the old grey church of Weston Zoyland five hundred of the beaten rebels lay imprisoned.

The scene inside the church was awful in its weird impressiveness. It might have been a gorge of the lost souls in the Inferno. The lurid glare of a few torches which were stuck at intervals against the pillars revealed the forms of men sitting and lying on the seats and floor in every attitude of dejection and despair. Up and down the aisles the iron-shod heels of the sentries rang upon the pavement. The greater part of the prisoners were silent, or only moaning with the pain of recent wounds; some were praying; one was raving, mad with terror. And, in truth, he and his companions had good cause for fear, for their conqueror was Feversham, the general of the Royalists, whose only mode of dealing with a rebel was to hang or shoot him without more ado, and who was only waiting for the day-break to begin the work of slaughter. A few only kept their resolution—among them two who were sitting together in the shadow of the pulpit steps. Both these men had been conspicuous in the fight, and both knew well that they must die at daybreak.

The elder of the two was a man of about thirty-five, with powerful thick-set frame, and strong and rugged features; a bad man to have against one, one might say. He was

by trade a horse-breaker, and a great part of his business was to break in the wild colts of the marsh. His companion was some six or eight years younger. His figure was tall and slight, but finely made, and his face was singularly handsome. He was the swiftest runner in the West of England, perhaps in the whole kingdom. His name was David Dare: that of the elder man was John Quixarvyn. Both were natives of the town of Axbridge, but, until the day before, they had been strangers to each other. Chance had made them comrades in the contest, where they had fought side by side, and where the same troop of Royalists had seized them both.

The two were silent. Quixarvyn had pulled out a short black pipe, had filled and lighted it, and was now smoking tranquilly. His companion had also pulled out something from his breast—but it was not a pipe; it was the portrait of a beautiful young girl. He took a long look at the lovely face—a look which said farewell.

Quixarvyn watched him. In the dim light in which they sat, he could not see the features of the portrait, but he guessed how the case stood.

"Poor fellow!" he said, with more tenderness than would have been expected from his looks. Then, after a minute's silence, he went on, as much to himself as to the other, "And yet my case is harder. I was in love—I *am* in love, God help me!—and I also have her portrait in my breast. What would I give if I could look on it as you can look on yours!"

Dare looked at him with interest.

"What!" he said, "have you also the same trouble—a poor girl who will go dis-



IN THE CHURCH.

tracted when she hears of what has happened to you?"

"No," said the other bitterly, "she will not go distracted; she has had enough of me. And I shall have the pain of dying unrevenged upon the knave who robbed me of her!"

It was strange to see how in a moment his eyes had grown ablaze with passion. The young man looked at him in astonishment.

"Who was it?" he inquired.

"Who was it?" echoed the other. "Do you think, if I knew that, that I should now have cause to writhe at dying without crying quits with him? No, I do not know him. I only know she loved me—that she cooled towards me—that, when I asked her plainly whether she had found a younger and a better-looking man, she confessed that it was true, and threw herself upon my generosity to set her free from our engagement.

I did so—in a frenzy of mad passion. But when I asked her for his name, she would not tell me, fearing, I dare say, that I might twist his neck. I should soon have found him; but then this war broke out, and in my rage I could not keep myself from rushing to the fight, to cool my blood with blows. And so, here I am—going to be shot at daybreak. But I swear to Heaven, if I only had that fellow in my power for one brief minute, I could die contented."

"You are right," said the other; "I should feel the same."

Quixarvyn drew a portrait from his breast, and held it out to his companion.

"Look," he said, "is this a face to jilt a

man? though it is one to drive him crazy. Let me look at yours—it is not more innocent than this one, I dare swear."

The young man took the portrait, and at the same time handed him his own. Each looked in silence at the portrait in his hand—in a silence of amazement, of stupefaction. The two portraits represented the same person!

Quixarvyn was the first to break the silence.

"What!" he said, drawing a deep breath and bursting into a low laugh, which was both fierce and glad, "you, was it? To think that I have found you after all! Fate is kinder to me than I fancied."

The other returned his gaze.

"Well," he said, "it *was* I, it appears; though I never knew it, nor suspected it. And," he added simply, "it has been no one's fault."

"No one's fault?"

"No, no one's. Mary Seldon liked you, but she did not love you, and when we met she found out her mistake. You frightened her with your mad humours. Without mentioning your name she told me the whole story. You could not make her

happy, and I could ; that's the whole case. Do you blame her ?”

“No,” said Quixarvyn, thrusting the portrait back into his breast, “I don't. But I have sworn to be equal with the man who turned her mind against me—I will never believe he acted by fair means—and I am going to do it. Defend yourself ; I give you warning.”

Both men sprang to their feet at the same instant, and stood glaring at each other. At that moment there was heard outside the church the rattle of a drum.



“BOTH MEN SPRANG TO THEIR FEET.”

Only the rattle of a drum. But the sound struck them motionless as figures turned to stone. Nor was the effect on their companions less remarkable. There was a moment's silence in the church, deep as the silence of the dead ; then a movement—a long thrill of horror. That summons meant that day was breaking, and that their hour was come.

The guards set instantly to work to prepare the first batch of prisoners to be led out of the church. Dare and Quixarvyn were among the first seized. With about a dozen

others they were marched into the open air. The grey dawn was scarcely giving way to the first streaks of sunrise as they passed out of the churchyard gates ; but the whole village was wide awake and in a tumult of excitement ; indeed, there had been little sleep that night. Every window was alive with terror-stricken gazers, as the party of doomed men, surrounded by a band of soldiers, were hurried through the narrow streets and out upon the open moor.

At the border of the moor sat an officer on horseback, surrounded by a troop of soldiers. Here the party halted, and the guards saluted. The officer was a man of about forty, whose dandified appearance, which was as trim as that of a toy soldier newly painted, showed oddly in the midst of soldiers stained with battle.

This was Lord Feversham—a man in whose nature vanity, calousness, and love of pleasure were about equally combined. His face was gay with pleasant expectation, as the rebels were drawn up before him.

“Good !” he remarked. “These were all ringleaders, were they ? Sergeant John, draw up your firing party, and shoot down every man of them.”

The order was instantly obeyed. The firing party was drawn up ; the prisoners were ranged in line at a few paces distance. At one extremity of the line David Dare and John Quixarvyn found themselves once more side by side.

An officer who sat on horseback at Feversham's right hand observed them.

“I know those two,” he said, pointing to them with his finger. “Pity two such fellows should be done for. One of them is the best runner in the country side, and the other the best rider.”

“Eh ? What ?” said Feversham, standing up in his stirrups. “Hold there a moment, Sergeant ; I spy a chance of gallant sport. What say you, Major ?—a race between these two across the moor, the one on foot, the other mounted. Will you back the runner ?”

The Major was a man of some humanity. He reflected for a moment,



"THE PARTY OF DOOMED MEN WERE HURRIED THROUGH THE NARROW STREETS."

"Agreed!" he said. "And to ensure that both shall do their best, let the winner have the promise of his life."

Feversham received this proposal with by no means a good grace, for to spare a rebel hurt him to the soul. But the delightful prospect of seeing two men racing for their lives, and of being able, after all, to shoot the loser, at length reconciled him to the scheme. He gave his orders, and the two prisoners were led out of the line.

Out upon the moor, about a quarter of a mile away, stood a solitary tree. This was selected as the starting-point. A double line of troopers was drawn up, stretching from the tree to the spot where the general was stationed, leaving a space between them like a racecourse, some yards wide. At the end of the course Feversham and the Major sat opposite each other. Whichever of the two competitors should pass between them first would be rewarded with his life and liberty.

And what were the sensations of the pair while these preparations were in progress?

David Dare, standing before the muskets of the firing party, had heard the strange proposal with a sudden thrill of hope, so

keen that it was almost like a pain. Then for a moment his heart fell again. He knew his own speed of foot, but he knew also that against a fleet horse urged by a skilful rider spurring for dear life his chance was likely to be small. Still there was hope again, and he could do his best. More he could not do, though success meant life—and life with Mary Seldon. At the last thought his eyes glistened, and he moved up the course between his guards with the keenness of a hound in leash.

In the meantime a trooper had dismounted, and Quixarvyn, armed with whip and spurs, having taken his place in the saddle, the horse was led by a couple of soldiers to the starting-point. Unlike his rival, Quixarvyn's face showed no elation. For one moment, on hearing the proposal, a gleam had come into his eyes; but now he rode with down-bent head, as if lost in thought. A sentence seemed to be constantly running in his head—the sentence used by Dare in their quarrel in the church, "You could not make her happy, and I could." He muttered the words over twenty times. It was not until the tree was reached, and the horse was halted with his head towards the spot where Feversham, discernible far off

between the lines, sat waiting, that he started, roused himself, and looked about him.

David Dare was standing on his right, stripped to the waist and without his shoes, ready for the starter's signal. Quixarvyn's guards dropped the horse's bridle; and Sergeant John, who stood between the two competitors, drew a pistol from his belt, to give the signal.

The excitement at that moment was intense. Not a sound was heard in the still morning air; but all down the double line were faces fixed intently on the two competitors. Feversham and the Major, with glasses at their eyes, sat motionless as statues. Even the condemned men, forgetful of their own approaching doom, stretched their necks to catch a glimpse of the strange contest on which depended life and death for two of their companions.

The Sergeant raised his pistol. The report rang out.

At the same instant horse and man shot out together from the mark. At first the runner, practised in flying from the start, and having less momentum than the horse, drew out in front. In a few seconds he was some twenty yards ahead. Then the gap between them ceased to widen; then it was seen to be decreasing; the horse was gaining—slowly at first, but gaining surely, stride by stride. When half the course was covered the horse had drawn up level—and then came such a race as had never yet been seen. For a hundred yards and more,

the two ran locked together, side by side, the runner almost flying over the crisp turf, the horse stretched out in a fierce gallop, with the rider standing in the stirrups. And now the goal was only fifty yards away; but the gazers drew a deep breath as they saw that now the horse was gaining—was drawing out in front. For one instant it seemed that all was over; the next, to their amazement, they were conscious that the horse was failing. Then they saw a gallant sight: they saw the runner nerve himself for a last effort, and, close upon the goal, dash past the horse and past the judges, and fall headlong on the turf.

At that scene, in spite of discipline, a frantic cheer broke forth along the line. Even Feversham himself smiled grimly, as one who, though he had just lost a bet, had gained its full equivalent in pleasurable excitement.



"THEY SAW THAT NOW THE HORSE WAS GAINING"

The winner, who had fallen panting and exhausted, was raised into a sitting posture by two troopers, one of whom poured a draught of brandy down his throat. The spirit almost instantly revived him, and in a few seconds he was able, though still weak and dizzy, to stand upon his feet and look about him.

A few paces off, his beaten rival stood beside his horse. Dare looked at him, and their eyes met. Quixarvyn's face bore an almost imperceptible smile; but it was not this, but something in his look which the other could not have defined, which struck him backwards like a shock. He staggered back a pace or two, bewildered by the light which broke upon his mind. Then he stepped up to his rival's side, and the guards, who saw no cause to interfere, falling back a little, he put his mouth close to Quixarvyn's ear:—

"You pulled that horse!" he said.

Quixarvyn looked at him, but answered not a word.

"You let me win," the other went on, his voice breaking. "For *her* sake you did it."

Quixarvyn drove his nails into his palms; he had acted, he was acting, not without a bitter cost.

"Make her happy," he said, briefly.

As he spoke he turned away, and strode swiftly to his old position at the head of the line of prisoners, before which the firing party was again drawn up.

Dare turned his back upon the scene, and thrust his fingers in his ears. Nevertheless, he could still hear, with horrible distinctness, the Sergeant's loud clear voice, with an interval between the words—

"Ready!"

"Present!"

"Fire!"

Almost as the word was given came the crash of the report. Moved by an impulse which he could not conquer, he turned round with a shudder. The soldiers were lowering their smoking muskets, and a thick white cloud hung above the line of prisoners stretched upon the ground. At the extremity of the line Quixarvyn lay upon his face, with his right hand clenched upon a portrait which he had taken from his breast, and a bullet through his heart.





A POEM FOR CHILDREN. BY C. C. MOORE.

T WAS the night before Christ-
 mas, when all through
 the house
 Not a creature was stirring,
 not even a mouse ;
 The stockings were hung
 by the chimney with care,
 In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be
 there ;
 The children were nestled all snug in their
 beds,
 While visions of sugar-plums danced in
 their heads ;
 And mamma in her kerchief, and I in my
 cap,
 Had just settled our brains for a long
 winter's nap—
 When out on the lawn there arose such a
 clatter,
 I sprang from my bed to see what was the
 matter.
 Away to the window I flew like a flash,
 Tore open the shutters, and threw up the
 sash.
 The moon, on the breast of the new-fallen
 snow,
 Gave a lustre of mid-day to objects below ;
 When, what to my wondering eyes should
 appear,
 But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny rein-
 deer,

With a little, old driver, so lively and
 quick,
 I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.
 More rapid than eagles, his coursers they
 came,
 And he whistled, and shouted, and called
 them by name ;
 " Now, Dasher ! now, Dancer ! now, Pran-
 cer and Vixen !



On, Comet ! on, Cupid ! on, Donder and
Blitzen !
To the top of the porch, to the top of the
wall !
Now dash away ! dash away, dash away
all !"
As dry leaves that before the wild hurri-
cane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to
the sky,
So, up to the housetop, the coursers they
flew,



With the sleighful of toys—and St.
Nicholas too.
And then in a twinkling I heard on the
roof
The prancing and pawing of each little
hoof.
As I drew in my head, and was turning
around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with
a bound.
He was dressed all in fur from his head to
his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with
ashes and soot ;



A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a pedlar just opening
his pack.
His eyes how they twinkled ! His dimples
how merry !



His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a
cherry ;
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a
bow,
And the beard on his chin was as white as
the snow.
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his
teeth,
And the smoke, it encircled his head like a
wreath.
He had a broad face and a little round belly,
That shook, when he laughed, like a bowl
full of jelly.
He was chubby and plump—a right jolly
old elf ;
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of
myself.

A wink of his eye, and a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to
dread.
He spoke not a word, but went straight to
his work,
And filled all the stockings ; then turned
with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose.
He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a
whistle,
And away they all flew, like the down of a
thistle ;
But I heard him exclaim, ere they drove
out of sight—
“ Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good
night ! ”



The Queer Side of Things.

THE ECONOMICAL CLUB.



"Umbrellam viridem canis nigri amici mei habes."—*Works of Grammarian.*

BEING that an economical Mind is by some held to be of all Things the most admirable, and by others the most insupportable; I am well pleased to cast this present Discourse among my Fellow Creatures as an Apple of Discord which shall afford them Matter for Dispute and haply for Fisticuffs in the approaching Festive Season.

penny, a most worthy Soul, but lately acquainted me that he was a Member of a Club that called itself the Economical Club: "For," says he, "it is composed of Persons of Sense and Calculation that would be curtail- ing the excessive Expenditure in Sustenance and other Necessaries at this Time prevalent."

With this the good Man, without more Ado, would hear of Nothing but carrying me with him to pass away Christmas with his Club, which, said he, had resolved to make their season- able Festivities a Monument of Economy for the Admiration of Humanity.

I was for excusing myself, having my Eye upon a fat Goose and some prime Hog-puddings that were exposed by an honest Poulterer hard by, besides a right Plum-Porridge that was promised me by my friend Sir Ogre, by reason of the Delight that had taken him at the reading of my recent Discourse about him; but Peter made great Haste to propound to me the following Enigma:—



"HAVING MY EYE UPON A
FAT GOOSE."

"Let me give you to know," says he, "that while we do indeed consume most homely Fare, yet we are by no Means



My Friend, Peter Clutch- in the Knowledge of it; but are of a settled Conviction that all the finest Delicacies of the Earth are spread before us: and while we are taking in Nothing but what is of a simple and digestible Nature, we are still convinced that we are most festively laying in a notable Store of Distempers and Indis- positions.

We will, I warrant you, devour cold Porridge with the De- meanour of a very Epicurus, and toss you down a Thimble- full of cold Water with all the en- joyment of Silenus himself. And you must know that we are able to pursue this Plan (which, by saving no less the Digestion than the Purse, while putting a Man in the Conviction that he is in- dulg- ing in most ill-advised Ex- cesses, must needs prove of a very abiding Comfort to Man- kind) by the means of a sur- prising Art or Science, but lately come to Light."

When he had made an End of speaking, I was full of a huge Inclination to come at the Inter- pretation of this curious Enigma; insomuch that I could in no wise abstain from letting this fellow have his Humour, and agreed to wait upon him at the Sign of the "Moor with Three Heads," where his Club

held its Sittings. On the Evening appointed, being Christmas, I did not fail to present myself at the Place ; but with a certain mistrust of myself, how I might keep myself from Flight on being presented with such simple Fare ; to the which End I had secretly provided myself with the fat Goose and the Hog-buddings, which I had caused

lar black Eyes and gold Chains. My Friend now whispered me in the Ear that this Gentleman was an East Indian Moor, or, as they are called, Hindoo ; and that it was he that would presently be putting them in the Belief that they were feasting sumptuously ; all which I by no means understood.



"I HAD SECRETLY PROVIDED MYSELF WITH THE FAT GOOSE AND THE HOG-PUDDINGS."

to be cunningly divided into such small Portions as I might conveniently dispose in my Pockets, and consume unobserved.

I found the Members of the Club to be all Persons of a discreet Age, and of a practical Turn of Mind ; among them being several Spinsters. We had no sooner

seated ourselves at Table but there entered a Gentleman of Colour, whom I at once recognised for a Moor ; for, I would have my Reader to know, for his Instruction, that all Men that are not white are Moors ; for, as there are Moors in Central Africa and in the Islands of the Southern Seas, no less are the People Moors that inhabit Japan, the East and West Indies, South America, and Malaya. These all wear Turbans and Scimitars, and are beautified with circu-



"A GENTLEMAN OF COLOUR."

At this time the Moorish, or Hindoo, Gentleman seated himself at the Head of the Table, and made certain curious Wavings of his Hands toward the Company ; and, there being presently served a cold Repast of Bread, Potatoes, Porridge, and Water—at which I could not repress a Shudder—they all fell to with a huge Enjoyment, expressing at the same time great Satisfaction at the Delicacy, Variety, and Richness of the Viands, and this with much Smacking of the Lips, and Sucking of the Fingers, as is the Mode in all good Society ; especially among the Tartars, who are the Moors inhabiting some Parts of the Continent of Asia.

"I do pray you make but a Trial of this Venison Pasty," says a Gentleman, passing a dry Crust to the good Lady that sat by him ; "for I vow it is of all Delicacies the most to be praised !"



"I DO PRAY YOU MAKE BUT A TRIAL OF THIS VENISON PASTY."

"It hath indeed a very excellent palatable Flavour," cries she in an Ecstasy, "and bespeaks a Cook of no small Parts in his Calling." "This Claret is of a notable rare Vintage !" cries a Third ; and in such Wise the Rest of them ; insomuch that I must needs stuff my Handkerchief in my Mouth to keep myself from laughing lustily. Then the whole Company were for pressing these Delicacies upon me, till I

had like to be hidden behind a Pile of dry Crusts and Porridge, which I would fain have let be ; but they would have Nothing but that I should fall to and consume them ; whereat I contrived with great Adroitness to pass most of the Mass beneath the Table, and so set Matters straight.

After that the Company fell to admiring the choice Plants which they would have it ornamented the Centre of the Table ; but, for the Life of me, I could swear there was no single Plant there, nor any Flower nor Fruit either ; nor was my Friend Peter of a different Persuasion from the Rest of them, vowing roundly that in his Life he had never seen finer Roses ; and presently made as if taking up one of them and presenting it to a Spinster that sat at his Right, at which she smirked in a gratified Way.

The Repast being finished, the whole Company were taken with a huge Admiration of the Panelling and Decoration of the fine Ancestral Hall in which they sat ; and this for all that it was among the barest whitewashed Rooms that I have set Eyes on, and of a very comfortless Aspect : and then what should they be at but all draw their Chairs toward a portion of Wall as flat and bare as any of it, being (as I gleaned) of a fixed Persuasion that there was a great Fireplace with a mighty comforting Fire of blazing Faggots therein !

At this time Peter would have me come

with him into another Apartment that we might smoke a Pipe together, and as we passed out I overheard some of the Company admiring the Christmas Decorations of Holly and Ivy Boughs, and Wreaths ; of which, nevertheless, I would have been sworn there was not so much as a Vestige about !

No sooner were we come into the other Apartment but I cried out roundly on my Friend about this outrageous Plesantry that he and the Others would be putting



"HE FELL PUFFING ANGRILY."

upon me ; whereat he was mightily diverted at my Perverseness in denying the Existence of the Delicacies, and the Elegance of the Surroundings.

"For I would have you know," said he with some Warmth, "that we are here in a most venerable Country Mansion that was erected by our Ancestors Centuries ago ; and I am persuaded that you must be gone clean out of your Senses that you cannot perceive these Suits of their Armour on every side, nor cannot admire the most sumptuous Repast that has been spread before you !" And with this he fell puffing angrily at a long Pipe that in no way existed.

I now perceived the Moorish Gentleman from Hindustan approach me, and wave his hands before me ; whereupon I suddenly awoke to my previous Blindness and Lack of Perception, seeing that I now became aware of the very Truth of all that my Friend had averred ; for as there stood indeed the Suits of Armour on all Hands, so there were also the panelled Walls and the Christmas Decorations.

That I might be assured I was not taken with Dreams nor any Trick of the



"ADMIRING THE CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS."



"PUNCH."

Imagination, I straightway went into the Dining Hall ; whereon I now perceived with no little Surprise that the great Fire was in fact blazing there, and this without a Possibility of Doubt ; also that the Company were dressed with great elegance ; more-over all else was as the Company had said.

The Moorish Hindoo now carried in a great Bowl of steaming Punch, to which we betook ourselves heartily, the while the Spinsters and some of the Gentlemen played a very pleasing Game of Blind Man's Buff ; after that a Country Dance, in which we all joined ; and then again to the Punch and mulled Ale, to which some of us applied ourselves with so great good Will that it was with no little Difficulty we compassed the arriving at the outer Door at some three of the Clock in the Morning.

But no sooner were we come into the Street, but Peter and I were as sober as any Judge ; whereat I was overcome with a great Surprise and Marvelling what all this might mean ; and Peter, who perceived what was exercising my Mind, made so knowing a Grimace upon me that I was but the more confounded.

"Now," says he, with a great Enjoyment of himself, "I will be solving you this Enigma that methinks sits too heavily on your Brain. You must know then, for the

Truth's Sake, that you have had no delicate Meats, nor any Punch ; but have indeed fared most wholesomely and economically upon plain Food, to the great sparing of your Digestion and the Avoidance of evil Humours ; seeing all this Festivity has been but a Phantasy brought about by a new Science called Hypnotism. This Hindoo," he continued, "is none other than a most skilled and accomplished Juggler that came under our Notice by the means of a Narration in the Daily Paper : in the which it was set forth that a certain Traveller, having with him a Kodac, came haply upon a Hindoo Juggler that was engaged in causing a Tree to grow from Nothing under the

Eyes of a Circle of Spectators ; whereon the Traveller took the occasion to make a Photograph of the Scene, and was thereafter mightily astonished at finding that, for all the Photograph indeed reproduced the



"MADE SO KNOWING A GRIMACE UPON ME."

Spectators and the Juggler, yet it in no wise gave any trace of the Tree.

"From this Circumstance it was concluded that this Juggler must needs have put upon the whole Company an Hypnotic Influence, to the end they should imagine the Tree; whereupon certain of us would have Nothing but that We should form ourselves into an Economical Club, and invite this Performer to put upon us his Hypnotism; and with how great Success and Benefit I shall leave you to judge."

The more I reflected on these Circumstances and my Friend's Discourse, the more I was of a settled Persuasion of the Benefits of this System, for truly, in the reckoning up of it, the Balance is most hugely on the Side of the Plan:—

Item : to one Banquet for twenty with Wine, Strong Waters, and other Sundries	£	s.	d.
	35	4	9 $\frac{3}{4}$
Item : to Inconvenience of ten male Headaches and twenty assorted Indigestions and Dyspepsias, together with all Apothecaries' Bills, &c.	43	17	8
Item : other resultant Evils ...	10	1	2
<i>Contra :</i>	89	3	7 $\frac{3}{4}$
Item : to Hire of one Juggler	10	0	0
Balance to Credit of New Plan	79	3	7 $\frac{3}{4}$

I will but recommend the above to my Readers' intelligent Consideration and Digestion, for the great Benefitting of the latter; and close this Speculation with wishing them a Merry Christmastide, which, by the following of the New Plan, they will nowise fail to secure. J. F. SULLIVAN.



A PRIZE FAMILY.

Mr. and Mrs. HENRY JENKINSON and their children, of Lathom, Ormskirk, who gained the prize offered by *Tit-Bits* to the reader who had the largest number of children still living.



AFTER THE CHRISTMAS PUDDING.
DOCTOR SQUILLS: "NEXT!"



2 A.M. A GHOST STORY.



ENTER GHOST: "WHEN ARE YOU COMING TO BED, DEAR?"



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